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THE MINERAL WORKERS

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THE MINERAL WORKERS

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

WILLIAM BOYLE

DUBLIN
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1910

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THE CHARACTERS

Sir Thomas Musgrove	*A Resident Landlord*
Stephen J. O'Reilly	*A Returned American Engineer*
Dan Fogarty	*A Contentious Farmer*
Ned Mulroy	*An Old-fashioned Farmer*
Patrick (Ned's Son)	*A Smart Young Farmer*
Uncle Bartle	*A Practical Romancist*
Casey	*A Poor Law Guardian*
Dick	*An Engine Driver*
Mrs. Walton	*Sister to Sir Thomas*
Mary	*Ned's Wife*
Kitty	*Ned's Daughter*

THE MINERAL WORKERS

ACT I

SCENE.—*A farm-house kitchen. The entrance door is at the back, somewhat on the left; in the centre is a window covered half way up with a muslin curtain. In right-hand corner, far back, a door leads to the parlour of the house. A dresser stands between this door and the front of the stage against the right wall. A wide open fireplace is on the left side, partly screened from the door by a projecting wall, pierced by a square hole commanding a view of the entrance door. A white deal table stands under the window. A few wooden chairs and forms are round the kitchen. A paraffin oil lamp hangs from the roof. A string of herrings and a flitch of bacon hang in the chimney above the fireplace.*

Ned Mulroy sits in front of the fire, Uncle Bartle on the bench beyond it. Ned is a clean-shaven, oldish man, Uncle Bartle an old man with a long white beard and gentle manner. Mary Mulroy stands looking out the open door. She is dressed in linsey-woolsey and wears a check apron and a white linen cap tied with ribbon round her head.

Mary (*comes from the door*). Kitty's here at last. Now we'll know the ins and outs of the whole story, Uncle Bartle.

Bartle. Ah, Mary, it's yourselves that needn't care!—with the land your own as long as grass grows or water runs, my dear.

Ned. Praises be to him that made it! (*Takes off his hat and replaces it*.) But it wouldn't be ours this many a long year, Uncle Bartle, if it wasn't for the money Michael's Stephen sent us from America.

Mary. Dan Fogarty says Stephen's coming home to take it off us.

Bartle. Dan says more than his prayers.

Mary. Dan's a wise man, though there's them don't think it.

Ned. He's wise enough in some things.

Bartle. Well, wise or unwise, you're not going to let him put between yourselves and Stephen.

Ned. Stephen himself tells us in his letter all he wants is to see us make a good use of the land.

Mary. He didn't care what use we made of it till he knew the landlord and the Government were both paid off. (*Goes again to the door*.)

Bartle. The Americans never had their hearts in one or other. But, there! If you want to keep out Stephen, and give Kitty to old Fogarty——

Ned. Whisht! Don't say a word.

Mary. Faith, Kitty has the paper; and, maybe, not a word about us in it, after all. (*Comes from the door*.)

[*Kitty comes in. She is a young girl with a neat shawl over her head. She hands a*

newspaper to Mary, her mother, who hands it to Ned, who passes it on to Bartle. Bartle rests the paper on his knees, puts on his spectacles, and opens the paper. Patrick, a young man of twenty-two, comes in. He wears a sleeved waistcoat and an old straw hat. He stands in the middle of the floor, listening. Kitty goes into the inner room.

Bartle (reading). "Return of a distinguished Irish American.—Mr. Stephen J. O'Reilly, whose mechanical genius has won both fame and fortune in the freedom-loving West, has arrived in Dublin. To a representative of this paper, who interviewed him last evening at his hotel, he explained the object of his return is to stimulate the industrial development of Ireland. The scheme which Mr. O'Reilly has in his mind is supported by expert authority; and, as far as we may venture to predict, bids fair to revolutionise the iron industries of the world. His cousin, Edward Mulroy, Esquire, of Carnarvogue (*Ned makes a wry face, the rest smile*), who has lately purchased through the Land Commission the entire rights of his extensive farm, has placed his land at Mr. O'Reilly's disposal——

Ned. Did you ever hear the likes of that?

Patrick. We never asked the man to come at all!

Bartle (still reading). "We heartily congratulate both these gentlemen on their enterprising spirit, and the country at large on the prospect of an industrial revolution which offers our people employment of so advanced a kind. Mr. O'Reilly has already taken steps to raise the necessary capital. Although a wealthy man himself, he sees

the wisdom of interesting other capitalists in this venture. He is at once proceeding to his relative's estate. Needless to say, we wish the project the success which it deserves." That's all.

Patrick. And too much of the sort it is.

Ned. Patrick, I'm doubtful what to say to this.

Mary. We don't want to say anything to it, good or bad. (*Sits and knits a stocking.*)

Patrick. Mother, Stephen J. O'Reilly's not going to have his own way here. We're not all as ignorant as he imagines.

Bartle. Patrick pins his faith on steam ploughs, Mary—nothing less.

Patrick. On modern cultivation, generally, Uncle Bartle.

Bartle. Stephen's methods may be much newer than your own, Patrick.

Patrick. The Americans know little about scientific agriculture. How to make machines is all that troubles them. (*Takes up the newspaper and goes to window, sitting on the table.*)

Ned. Nothing in the world is equal to a pair of horses and a good iron plough.

Mary. And half a dozen cows to milk in season.

Bartle (*smiling*). When Stephen comes home with his great invention you'll not think much of these.

Mary. Him and his invention! He'll be like his own old father, that used to be making little mills and whirlygigs while the farmers' horses waited outside prancing to be shod.

Bartle. Poor Michael! He spent his lifetime striving to find out perpetual motion.

Ned. And, when he died out there abroad, he hadn't what would bury him, they say. That's what he got by inventions.

Bartle. Somebody must begin or nobody would finish anything; and Stephen, maybe, has it in him from the father. If he wasn't clever he wouldn't have scraped up what he did among the Yankees, I can tell you.

Ned. He did well there, by all accounts, and he nothing but a common blacksmith when he left here five and twenty years ago.

Bartle. It's not as long as that, Ned.

Ned. You needn't tell me. It was a year or two before I was married. You weren't in the country at the time.

Mary. And Ned, here, paid them twenty pounds—the last of Stephen's mother's portion out of her father's place, though she was in her grave at the time, God rest her, and that's the money brought her son and husband to America.

Bartle. Well, Stephen's going to make you all that rich, you won't be speaking to a common body soon.

Mary (*mildly*). I wouldn't be proud, Uncle Bartle, if I had the wealth of the world.

Bartle. In troth, I wouldn't trust you Mary. It's driving in your carriage you'll be—if God didn't say agin it.

Mary. The ass and cart's good enough for me, Bartle, though I think Ned can well afford a jaunting car, with Kitty grown up on our hands, and people coming afther her.

Bartle. You don't call Dan Fogarty "people"?

Mary. I wish that he was younger. But his land is good and handy.

Ned. Sorrow wife the man is wanting, Kitty!—she can wait till some other boy comes round for her.

Mary. Dan has the best breed of cows in the country—and if the Lord spares Kitty——

Patrick (*looking up from the newspaper*). I don't think we ought to let this Yankee fellow in on us at all.

Bartle. He sent you good help to purchase out the land, and this was his grandfather's place not so very long ago, Patrick.

Patrick (*angrily*). And how much debt was due on it when you got it, father? (*Comes forward*). How much? Remember that!

Ned (*lightly*). Oh, there was a trifle, one way and another.

Patrick. It was no trifle, father. You were five years before you had a pair of horses you could call your own.

Bartle. You weren't born at the time, Patrick.

Patrick. If I wasn't, itself, I heard enough about it. And my work's in the place now, and no stranger's coming here to claim it over me. (*Returns to his paper.*)

Bartle. That is all newspaper talk. You don't know what Stephen's going to do. Sure, he wouldn't be telling them.

Ned. If he has much sense he wouldn't, Bartle.

Bartle. He used to be a quiet, steady boy, working in his father's forge; and till I hear more I'll not believe he's altered.

Ned. We'll wait, as Uncle Bartle says, till we see him. Uncle Bartle knows more nor any of us. The priest himself allows that.

Bartle. Much good my knowledge does me! (*Rises to go.*)

Ned (tenderly, also rising). If you hadn't spent your lifetime rearing other people's orphans—(*Bartle makes a motion of dissent. Ned puts his hand on Bartle's shoulder*)—and making friends of them that would be falling out, it's not this way you'd be now. When you sold a heifer, you might graze out with me, or the likes of me, it's your sister and her children always had the good of it.

Bartle (with assumed sullenness). They wanted it. Didn't they?

Mary. Oh, indeed, they did, and if they got as much more, it's wanting, wanting they'd be still, God help them!

Ned. And they with a place of their own, and you without one, Bartle.

Bartle. But, Ned! It's time I was away. (*Pauses.*) If I was in your shoes, Patrick, I wouldn't quarrel with the man who has the big thoughts in his head and the yellow money in his pocket. I wouldn't quarrel with the man who was doing well in another country, and comes back to the old land to try and start it moving. God reward him.

Patrick. I'm not the sort to quarrel over trifles, Uncle.

Bartle. That's right, my son. Make your mind up not to quarrel over trifles and you'll never quarrel over anything at all.

[*Fogarty rushes in. He is a coarse, middle-aged man, who carries himself with an air of great importance and speaks with a chuckle, crowing and gloating over unpleasant words. He blows his nose frequently with a red handkerchief. He has a stout stick in one hand and a newspaper in the other. The rest do not treat him quite seriously.*

Fogarty. Ho, ho! Ned Mulroy; you're the man that's in for trouble. You'll be ruined, body and bones, if you don't take my advice. Out on the road you'll see yourself, and your whole place turned upside down by Yankee speculators.

Ned. What's all this for, Mr. Fogarty. Insense me into who is going to ruin me.

Fogarty (to Bartle). Ho, ho, ho! He didn't travel for his knowledge the same as you and me, Bartle. He never crossed the ocean in his life. O Lord, no.

Bartle. My travelling, Mr. Fogarty, was in the stoke-hole of a steamer. You went oncet or twicet as far as Liverpool.

Fogarty. Three times, Bartle, three times. O dear, ay! And oncet, as near as nothing stranded and wrecked upon the Welsh mountains, and my cattle driven overboard before my own two eyes. But I was paid for them. O Lord, ay!—full value, every shilling . . . . . That's how we got the knowledge, Bartle! But these people! (*lowers his voice*) they don't know B from a bull's foot—God help them! It's destroyed they'd be entirely if they hadn't me and you to come to, Bartle! when they want advice and judg-

ment. (*Blows his nose, putting his stick under his arm as he does so.*)

Mary. It's the grace o' God entirely we have good friends and neighbours.

Fogarty. Mary Mulroy, it's a good job for you someone knows the time of day. If they didn't, you and Ned and this feather-headed son o' yours 'id be made hares of, ma'am. Nothing else but hares of.

Ned. And what's the care that's on us, now, Mr. Fogarty?

Fogarty. Ruination, Ned Mulroy. Red, rank, raving ruination.

Mary. Heaven reward you, Mr. Fogarty! Tell us how you heard it.

Fogarty. You're a sinsible woman, Mary, but your husband isn't fit to mind a cabbage garden.

Ned (*smiling*). Mary, you hear the high opinion Mr. Fogarty has of me.

Mary. I'm listening like a child to every word he says. We all know that he's the head-piece of the country. God spare him!

Fogarty. Ho, ho! The country needs a head-piece. If it wasn't for me there wouldn't be a roof left standing in the parish—not a one.

Patrick (*looking up from the newspaper*). You advised us to go on paying rent for ever, and the land's our own, now, at half your valuation.

Fogarty. These young fellows know the divil and all!

Bartle. Never mind them. Tell Ned and herself the trouble that's before him.

Mary (*puts forward a chair*). And give your feet

a rest, Mr. Fogarty, while you're about it. (*They all sit.*)

Fogarty (*speaks judiciously*). In the first place, your father never made a will, Mulroy.

Ned. No, God rest him! Not a will, or will.

Fogarty. Nor your grandfather before him?

Ned. Not that I ever heard of, God forgive them.

Fogarty. O Lord, no! They had no education, good or bad. They were both as ignorant of law and order as yourself, Ned.

Ned. Sure, the crathurs couldn't help it!

Fogarty. Very well. This Yankee fellow that's coming home 'ill sell you out branch and stump, and after that, get rid of everything, and run away.

Ned (*seriously*). Where do you find this information, Mr. Fogarty?

Fogarty (*unfolds newspaper*). Oh, there's no secret about it. The public Press supplies it, Ned Mulroy. The public Press, that's open-eyed and open-mouthed. Listen to "The Banner." (*Reads.*) "Information from an unquestionable source has reached us as we go to press that a number of American speculators are laying snares for the misguided farmers, who, against our advice, purchased under Government. So long as the fee-simple of the land remained in possession of the landlords these adventurers were powerless. Now, however, certain speculators, pretending to be relatives with unsettled claims, or pioneers of industry, are swooping down on Ireland to the inevitable ruin of unwary entertainers. Needless to say, they are

adventurers, devoid alike of principle or knowledge. We warn our readers against any such who come their way." (*Folds paper up.*) Ha, ha! There it's for you, Ned! If your cousin has enough to fee a lawyer, he'll smother you in writs, and the best thing you can do is threaten the police on him, and send him where he came from.

Patrick. "The Banner" blackguards everyone who won't give it an advertisement.

Mary. Mr. Fogarty knows best, Patrick avick.

Patrick. Nobody reads that paper but old fellows over fifty.

Fogarty. Ho, ho! That's all you know! It's the greatest paper in the world. There's a page of letters in this week to prove it. (*Points to a page.*)

Patrick. You didn't follow it's advice yourself. You purchased like the rest of us when everything was settled.

Fogarty. I had to purchase when you all agreed to purchase. O dear, ay! We'd get the land for nothing if we followed out "The Banner."

Patrick (turns over his paper). "The Sentinel" calls it the "organ of the omadhawns."

Fogarty. Ned Mulroy, you never let that rag into your house. Last week it called respectable graziers the enemies of Ireland.

Ned. Sure, papers make out everybody's the inimy who does anything at all. Though I don't know much about these things myself.

Fogarty. I see. You've no enlightenment, Mulroy. Leave it to me. I'll take it on myself to give this interfering friend of your's the benefit of my experience.

Bartle. Do you know the kind of man that Stephen O'Reilly is?

Fogarty. O Lord, ay! To be sure! I often read about them speculators in America. They buy up all before them, and desthroy the counthry.

Bartle. They mayn't be all the same, Dan.

Fogarty (*looking contemptuously at Bartle*). My fine fellow, you're an authority! Why, you haven't land enough to sod a lark.

Bartle (*laughing quietly*). No, but I can hear its singing just as well as them that have. Still, you're right, Mr. Fogarty. We poor labouring men know next to nothing.

Fogarty. O dear, no! It couldn't be expected.

Ned. Uncle Bartle has a good head on him, with land or without it.

Fogarty. Ah! he's not bad, poor creature, in his way. But you needn't fret about it, Ned Mulroy. I'll look after you, and you can pay me (*looks significantly at Kitty, who comes in*) with a week's ploughing in the spring time, or maybe some way else.

[*Kitty looks out the window.*

Ned. That's a busy time with everyone.

Fogarty (*leaning over*). If I made up my mind on one point, Ned ——

Kitty. Father, here's one of them mad coaches tearing up the road, letting groans out of itself, and splashing clabor round about as fast as it can travel.

Patrick (*goes to the door*). It's Sir Thomas Musgrove's motor.

Mary. Thank God, we owe him nothing.

Ned. He wasn't such a bad landlord when we did.

Bartle. They're all good landlords now they're done with, Mary.

Fogarty. Sir Thomas! Oh, Sir Thomas is the playboy! Hail fellow with every blackguard in the country. And that sister of his is ten times worse. She's my darling out and out. The devil's darlin'!

Mary. The lady that rides the furlygig, God save us! like a man.

Bartle. Yes, Mary. She's a fine, courageous lady, isn't she?

Mary. Sorrow be off the trousers, Bartle! Why does she put them on?

Bartle. She doesn't wear them often; only on the bicycle.

Mary. Hut, tut, Uncle Bartle! You know it isn't natural for women to do such things at all.

Ned. Them high-up ones do anything that comes into their heads.

Fogarty. Aw-haw-haw! (*The tooting of a motor horn interrupts him.*)

Patrick (*still looking out of door*). The motor's stopped, and someone's coming out. I'm certain sure it's Stephen.

Fogarty. In Sir Thomas's motor! O Lord, no! (*They all rush out but Bartle and Kitty.*)

Kitty (*peeps out the window*). O, Uncle Bartle, he's not old at all, and smiles on him for everyone. Come over here and look at him. It's plazed he's wid himself.

Bartle. Why wouldn't he, and him that rich and clever?

Kitty. And rings on half his fingers. I wonder what he'll bring me? (*She comes near Bartle.*)

Bartle. A fortune, maybe, Kitty, or a husband.

Kitty. He never had a wife?

Bartle. No; or we'd be hearing of her. You ought to try and catch him for yourself. He'd be better nor old Fogarty.

Kitty (*tossing her head*). A fly-around like him! He'll not be wanting anyone.

Bartle. God bless your senses, girl! They're the easiest to catch by rogues like you.

Kitty (*demurely*). But he's my cousin, Bartle.

Bartle. Oh, he can buy out the kindred if he has lots of money.

Kitty. If he bought a watch and chain for me, he'd never miss it.

[*Mary comes in hastily.*

Mary. My, O my! What's this for? Stephen, himself, all the way from America, and not a taste of fresh butter in the house! Run, Kitty, dear, as fast as you can travel, down to Comisky's—I know they churned yesterday—and get a print or two for goodness holy sake. (*Kitty is taking a plate off the dresser.*) Never mind the plate. You can wrap it nicely in a leaf of cabbage. Go and get your shawl. (*Kitty hurries into the room. Mary puts a basket on the table.*) O Bartle, he's the fine, comely boy, and that gay and friendly. (*Kitty returns in her shawl.*) There's the good girl! (*Kitty goes out taking the basket on her arm.*) Ineagh! ineagh! And me

without my new cap on or anything. (*Goes into the room. Bartle peeps through the hole in the wall behind him.*)

Fogarty (*outside*). O Lord, ay! Improved all under my advice. A teetotally altered place entirely, from the time you left it, Mr. O'Reilly. (*Fogarty comes in; after him O'Reilly and Ned. O'Reilly is clean-shaven, pale, and forty-five years of age. He is well dressed. His accent is Irish, with an occasionally assumed American intonation. He speaks very slowly and distinctly. Fogarty blows his nose, and continues speaking.*) Ah, no! Ned Mulroy never had a lot to boast of. But he has good strong neighbours round him. Substantial men, who give him an example how to till the land. That's far better for him than the help you sent him. O Lord, ay! Take a seat, Mr. O'Reilly, take a seat. You're welcome home. Where's Mrs. Mulroy?

O'Reilly (*to Fogarty.*) I reckon, friend, you run this family.

Fogarty. Me? Ho, ho! I run the whole country, sir, as far as they allow me. I'm someone here, I tell you.

O'Reilly. So I see. Who are you, now? (*Throws his gloves on table.*)

Fogarty. Oh, you must remember me—Mr. Daniel Fogarty, of Preshogue Farm. Over th' other side o' the Lough.

Ned. Mr. Fogarty used to be a clerk in Drogheda.

Fogarty. Head manager in Mr. Mooney's corn store. You don't forget me, surely

O'Reilly. Mr. Daniel Fogarty, of Preshogue Farm aud Mooney's corn store, I guess you're one of those my memory has moulted. (*Sees Bartle, who rises.*) Uncle Bartle! Dear old friend, how goes it? (*Shakes hands.*)

Bartle. Much the old way, Stephen. You are welcome home.

O'Reilly. Thank you, Bartle. You're not so light of foot as you were in '67—though I don't remember that—except the talk about it in the forge.

Bartle. We're all slower, Stephen, since that time.

O'Reilly. Yes, sir. But I trust we hold our hearts as high, if not our hands.

Bartle. The high hearts of the forge are low enough to-day.

[*Mary comes in from the room. She wears a smart cap with ribbons. She wipes a chair with her apron, and puts it forward.*

Mary. You're a nice lot not to give the man a seat, and all the way he travelled.

[*Stephen sits. Fogarty draws a chair and sits beside him.*

O'Reilly. Cousin Mary, you remember how we used to trade at school—swopping bread at play-time? You used to have white baker's loaf and I had always oaten cake for luncheon.

Fogarty. Ha, ha! These were hard times on the lower orders.

O'Reilly (*to Mary*). You don't remember, Mary?

Mary. Indeed, I do, quite well.

O'Reilly, If you had emigrated, Mary, you'd have made a trust in bread-stuffs. You were almighty hard.

Mary. We were only children, Stephen.

O'Reilly (*smiling*). But you knew, Mary, how to hold your own against a gossoon's appetite. I respect you for it, cousin, and I expect to push the point against you now I'm here to try another deal with you.

[*Patrick comes in and stands leaning on the table.*

Fogarty (*to Bartle*). Aw, haw! I knew that point was coming.

O'Reilly. Cousin Ned, is this old gentleman a member of your family? (*Indicating Fogarty.*)

Ned. No, then; not exactly. He's a well-off man, and he takes great interest in his neighbour's business.

O'Reilly. A suspicion of that same begins to dawn on me. Well, Stephen J. O'Reilly, blacksmith, tramp, and mining electrician, is not addicted, sir, to dealing cards below the table. I come on business. I don't care a cent who hears it. And we'll take the business first before we talk of friendship.

Fogarty. Oh, I know your business. Ned Mulroy consulted me about it. As he told you, I am interested in his family. O, ho! ho!

O'Reilly. Right you are. Hold up your ears and listen. Uncle Bartle will preside. Cousin Mary, you've a seat on this convention. I know your grip of old. (*Mary sits a little apart.*) Now we're fixed. Well, here is my prospectus. Cousin Ned Mulroy, you've purchased real estate under the British Crown. I've no objection at the present moment to that ancient superstition,

Bartle. (*Speaking slowly.*) You have purchased —real—estate containing iron. I have money—just enough to start with—and I can get more——

Fogarty. Ho, ho, ho! "The Banner" told us!

O'Reilly. As much as I require—and, what's better, far, than money in New York or Ireland—knowledge. And I have an idea which, if all goes well, will smelt the ore of this terrestrial universe. Cousin Ned Mulroy, I want my hand on your estate to carry out this project. (*Ned looks helplessly at Fogarty and the others.*) It's a tall order, I admit, but I have confidence in myself and in my people, and I mean to execute it.

Fogarty. Ho, ho, ho! You're the boy! But you'll not catch us sleeping. Ned, it's lucky you have me beside you now.

O'Reilly. Mr. Daniel Fogarty, Stephen J. O'Reilly has got no use for anyone asleep. If he had, the iron would be left sleeping still, I doubt.

Ned. You don't know that we have iron here at all.

O'Reilly. I do. I once helped to sink a well here thirty years ago, and struck it then. Ignorant and all, I spotted what it was because I was a blacksmith. My father—God reward him!—told me in a mine at Colorado, where we worked, about the seams he saw here. Well, I decided, if I had my way, I'd pack my trunk to home some day and work them. I've had my way considerable. Yes, sir, and here I am to do it.

Ned. Wouldn't that destroy the good soil at the top?

O'Reilly. It would cover up the whole con-

founded country with a rash of furnaces. You bet it would.

Ned. The fine, rich soil, where we can grow such crops.

O'Reilly. Crops of what, friend Ned? Of children raised for export?

Ned. Heavy crops of wheat and oats and barley, now the land's our own.

Patrick. And roots, father, under scientific culture.

Mary. And rich grass for the cows.

O'Reilly. My simple, Irish cousins, grain or grass will never make you or this country prosper. One big ship would carry more across the ocean than you'd raise in all your lives. Iron ore will grow a million dollars in a year, and give work, too, to keep your folk to home, if we can strike a bargain.

Fogarty. O, ay, to be sure! Your promises are cheap. Back them up with cash, and we'll believe you.

O'Reilly. I propose to pay you, Ned, two thousand pounds for the mining rights and surface rights for seven years to start with.

Fogarty. Two thousand pounds! Pooh! Blatherskite! Where would anyone get two thousand pounds that never owned an acre?

O'Reilly (*smiling*). It happens out there sometimes.

Fogarty. Oh, yes, and so does robbery and murder.

O'Reilly. Well, we bury those we kill. They'll never cross the water to trouble you in Ireland.

Ned. It's a great round lump of money. God direct us!

O'Reilly. Two thousand pounds in cash, and royalties to come.

Fogarty (*recovered*). Ay, ay, ay! I'd like to clap eyes on it!

O'Reilly. I know the country notion about money you don't see, and have taken some precautions. (*He takes from a pocket-book two notes which he hands to Fogarty, who examines them.*)

Fogarty. A thousand pound note of the Bank of England!!! (*Gloatingly.*) Holy O! I never saw the likes! (*Holds one up to the light and looks through it.*)

Bartle. But, Stephen, where's the coal you'll want to come from? You know you haven't any coal in Ireland.

O'Reilly. Bartle, you're the man that used to tell the fairy stories. How did your wit strike a point so practical?

Bartle. You can't smelt ore with peat, I know that, Stephen.

O'Reilly. My dear old friend, I'll smelt by electricity.

Fogarty (*hands back the notes to O'Reilly*). Ay, ay, to be sure! And send the stuff you make away by telegraph.

O'Reilly (*quietly*). I mean to do that by electric railroad.

Bartle. Where do you propose to get your motive power from?

O'Reilly (*triumphantly*). From water, Bartle! God's own water! Sixty million tons are running

waste beside you every week. Water is the only wealth your conquerors can't take, and water will outlast the Bank of England!!

Fogarty. Much good the water is to you or anyone.

O'Reilly. I'll mould it into iron bars, if I'm allowed.

Bartle. An old saint left a prophecy that a man would come one day and mould the water.

Fogarty. Ho, ho, ho! You'll have to mould Sir Thomas Musgrove first. Saint or sinner daren't taste or touch it without his permission.

O'Reilly. Sir Thomas is as hot on this as I am. He's in the business with me.

Fogarty. Bow, wow, wow! Sir Thomas wouldn't sit down in the room that you were in—civil and all as he is. No, not if it was gold you started digging, Stephen. (*Blows his nose and rises.*)

[*Kitty comes in by front door with basket and passes to the inner room. Mary goes to the dresser.*

O'Reilly (*pulls Fogarty down into his seat*). Sit down, you crouching slave, and listen. Sir Thomas Musgrove is a live man, not a mummy, and, what's better still, Sir Thomas is my friend. Surprised? I guessed you would. We met out West, and, as you know, we Irish crawl before a title. I worked to his acquaintance. I don't mind telling you this ore was all I wanted. Well, I put my plans before him. He hummed and hawed, but tumbled there at last, and owned that if he had heard of me before he wouldn't have sold his land to you so easy.

Ned. He said when he came back that he regretted selling.

O'Reilly. Well, that was kind of foolish. But he has a head, Sir Thomas, though it's none too active, and so, he's riding back into the mine with us.

Fogarty. Sir Thomas wants to spite you for presumption.

O'Reilly. If so, I reckon it won't quite come off. I thought, like you, these aristocrats were fools! I was wrong, Cousin Ned. Snobs—wrong again, Dan Fogarty. I said to him: Sir Thomas, I used to shoe your father's horses over home; you look down on me for that. What was his reply? "When you come home prospecting, stay with me." No, sir, don't look down on aristocrats. Many of them's just as good as we are. . . . I'm staying at his house.

Mary (*at the dresser*). Staying with Sir Thomas Musgrove at the castle?

O'Reilly. Yes, Mary, though it ain't much of a castle.

Mary. Then you won't be even taking tea with us?

O'Reilly. Faith, Mary, I will so, and try to recoup myself for all the bread you cheated me out of before we graduated.

Mary. You're the droll Stephen, after all your travels!

[*She goes into the room. Kitty comes out and in, carrying plates, &c., during the ensuing. Bartle hangs the kettle on the fire. Patrick comes close to O'Reilly, listening eagerly, attracted by his talk.*

Ned. So you think this mining can be made to pay?

O'Reilly. My dear Ned, it'll turn out ten thousand tons a year, when we get into working.

Fogarty. Pooh, pooh! A mad, feather-headed scheme. No sensible man would dream of it! Mining in Ireland! O Lord! Did you ever hear such nonsense?

O'Reilly. You prefer to skim the surface, rather than to dig?

Fogarty. Oh, ho! There's nothing here to dig up, And if there was, our people wouldn't do it. They're too lazy.

O'Reilly (*looking at Fogarty contemptuously*). Never did much work yourself, I reckon?

Fogarty. I know what work is, if I'm not a labourer.

O'Reilly. Well, so do I, Mr. Fogarty, and those that don't want work can just look on and grumble.

Patrick (*who has been thinking*). It's a grand scheme—a grand scheme! Electricity will carry all before it.

O'Reilly (*looking admiringly at Patrick*). Here's a lad of twenty seems to have the hang of this much better than his elders.

Fogarty. Him! A thick-necked, sulky rascal. He knows nothing!

O'Reilly. I expect he'll hire men as good as you, some day, before he finishes.

Fogarty. Ho, ho, ho! Hire men as good as me! I've six-and sixty acres of the best land in the county. Ned Mulroy knows.

Ned. It's all that! Fine—fine land entirely.

O'Reilly. Sitooated where?

Fogarty. Along the River Glinn—beyond the Lough Ree.

O'Reilly (*shakes hands with Fogarty*). Mr. Daniel Fogarty, I'm proud to meet you. I reckon we'd have got kind o' thick sooner, had I known about them six-and-sixty acres. Of course, I remember you, now I look again. That well-shaped head, that honest, sound suspicion! Won't you try a smoke? (*Offers Fogarty a cigar.*)

Fogarty (*rising*). Ho, ho! my fine fellow, you'll not butter me. I know too much for that. Ned, I wish you a good morrow. (*Going.*)

O'Reilly (*also rising and pulling Fogarty by the coat*). Come, come, my good old friend; you're not going yet. I remember Preshogue Farm, where Mick Devlin lived. It used to be a place for spearing eels. And so it's in your hands? Don't smoke! Well, Ned Mulroy does. (*Passes cigars to Ned and Bartle.*) Preshogue Farm!

Fogarty. I purchased it for thirteen hundred pounds—O Lord, ay!—and I'll keep it. (*Blows his nose.*)

O'Reilly (*coaxingly*). Mr. Fogarty, you'll come into the mining with Sir Thomas and the rest? You don't know what you're missing.

Fogarty. I'm missing daylight robbery and plunder.

O'Reilly. You'd rather sell at honest prices, then?

Fogarty. Sell? Me sell? O dear no, not at

all! I'll hold them six-and-sixty acres when the mine's closed up and done for.

O'Reilly (*sharply*). I prophesy you don't.

Fogarty. Who's to hinder me? Prophesy me that!

O'Reilly. I fancy I may back myself to hinder you. If we can't trade, there's nothing left but swallow you.

Fogarty. You'll have an ugly tooth-full. Faith, you will!

O'Reilly. I own you're none too tempting in appearance. But we've got machines to pulp you into sausage meat.

Fogarty. Aw, haw, haw! (*Going*.) All bounce and bunkum!

O'Reilly (*following a step*). Well, friend, if we can't buy you out, we'll cage you in like cholera. We'll not let anyone come near you on our railroad. We'll cut off wind and sun, and stifle you with furnaces.

Fogarty. You will, you will! Ho, ho!

O'Reilly. We'll dig the ground from under you, till you and your sixty acres tumble into hell.

Fogarty. Take care, my boy, take care! This is not America.

O'Reilly. No, sir, it is Ireland—starved and blasted by such trash as you. An Ireland with wealth laid by and folded underground, which energy might bring forth, and which I'll bring forth, with God's help and my own.

Fogarty. O ay!—all moonshine on a quaking bog! I heard that talk before.

O'Reilly. There has been talk enough—talk and

to spare. But this man, here, means business. (*Tapping himself.*)

Fogarty. Bankruptcy and ruin, Ned Mulroy, I tell you. That's what he'll do for you.

O'Reilly. What I'll do exactly, it's most too soon to tell. I'll say this much, however. He never sowed a crop with greater prospect of success than this one I'm projecting.

Fogarty (*scoffingly*). He'll make galvanic millions out of water! Oh, ho, ho! It's like Columbcille's old prophecies the women do be telling of.

[*A motor horn sounds without. Mary comes in from the room.*

Mary. It's just that, Mr. Fogarty. Columbcille's prophecy come true. (*Pointing out the window.*) Didn't he foretell the coaches would be running without horses?

Patrick (*looks out of window*). It's only Leather Jacket driving round the gossoons in the motor.

Ned (*as if to himself*). I'd rather work the land in the old way than anything on earth you could do with it, Stephen.

Patrick. No, father. You'll fall in with Stephen's plans. The world's marching onward; we'll not stay behind.

Fogarty. O Lord! You're all as mad as one another. Ned Mulroy, I'm done with you. (*Goes out.*)

[*Mary goes to the fire and pours water into teapot.*

Ned (*to Mary*). Mary, what am I to do between them?

Mary (*cheerfully*). What does Uncle Bartle think about it?

O'Reilly. Yes, Uncle Bartle will decide it. There he is, saying nothing, listening to us all.

Bartle. It's a big weight, Stephen, to put on an old man's shoulders, a big weight, and I'm doubtful I can lift it.

Mary. If them that has it in them to be wise won't speak, we can't expect it out of men like Fogarty.

Bartle (*rising and coming from the fire*). Mary and Ned, you've both been friends to me——

Mary. Never mind!

Bartle. Good friends and trusting friends, and it would go against my heart to see you troubled. But Stephen is a man has seen the world and knows things that the likes of us don't know, and things the likes of us will never know, the way we are; and when he tells us he has high hopes in him, we'd be foolish to set up our notions against his.

Ned. But is there any hope this can be done?

Bartle. It's hundreds and hundreds of years ago, a holy saint foretold, "When the Glinn and Awn Bwee run into Lough Ree, a river of gold will run out of it."

Patrick. The Glinn and Awn Bwee run in another direction altogether. You'll can't expect they'll turn back against the incline?

Bartle. Don't twist the old words round in that way, Patrick. They have their own sense in them in the Gaelic. Maybe it's a stream of luck or light

is going to flow about us! We don't know, and, in God's name, I'd give the prophecy a chance, for the sake of poor old Ireland.

Mary (*taking up the teapot and going into the room*). Never be setting your hand against the holy words of them that's gone, Ned, dear, whatever else you do.

Ned. In God's name have your way, then. An ignorant old man like me can't stand against you all. I was born in poverty, and if I have to die in poverty, what harm, if I don't do an unlucky thing? I'd like to work the land in the old way that I was used to, but the old way's not much good to me or anybody if God sees fit to change it. Take it, every acre, Stephen, and do with it what is best.

O'Reilly. My dear old friend, you'll not regret your choice, believe me.

Ned (*resignedly*). The Blessed Mary grant so!

Kitty (*comes in from the room*). The tea is ready, father.

[*O'Reilly looks at her in surprise.*

Ned (*rising*). Come, Stephen, and have a cup of tea in the old-fashioned way, and we'll talk more about it. (*Goes towards room.*)

O'Reilly. Is this your daughter, Cousin?

Ned. All we have—God spare her!

[*Patrick goes out by front door.*

O'Reilly (*still looking at Kitty*). Cousin Kitty, I heard of your being born.

Bartle. There she is grown up, and she and me are sweethearts.

O'Reilly (*shaking hands with Kitty*). We have

rich young men would like to stand in your shoes, Uncle Bartle.

Bartle. Troth, I'd sell them if I found an honest bidder, Stephen.

Mary. He spoils her—that's the truth. Come on and have your tea. (*Goes into room.*)

O'Reilly. Why wasn't Kitty here while we were making speeches?

Bartle. I'll warrant she was listening. She likes to hear Dan Fogarty. He has six-and-sixty acres.

Kitty. Indeed, I don't.

O'Reilly. I should think not. If I did, I'd eat his acres.

Bartle. He's afraid you mean to eat them. Come on, Stephen.

O'Reilly. It's a shame! (*Hesitates.*) I suppose I must, though. Kitty, I'll look up a present for you.

Mary (*within*). The tea's poured out and waiting.

O'Reilly (*to Kitty*). You're coming with us—aren't you?

Kitty. I must boil some more hot water.

O'Reilly. So long! I'll see you presently. (*Goes into room.*)

Bartle. Stick to it, my girl. The lad has heart and money.

Kitty. Don't be talking.

[*Patrick comes in laughing.*

Patrick. Oh, you should see old Fogarty! He's stumping down the road as if a dog was after him. Uncle Bartle, this is glorious!

Bartle. He wasn't long converting you.

Patrick. It's science that converted me. Science, our new St. Patrick! Uncle, we're going to have a great industrial revival.

Bartle. I'm going to have some tea. (*Goes into room.*)

[*Kitty has taken up O'Reilly's gloves, and has put one on her hand.*

Kitty. It fits me nicely, doesn't it?

Patrick (*looking at her keenly*). Don't be a fool, Kitty. Don't be getting notions. Stephen never looked at you.

Kitty (*hitting Patrick with glove*). Didn't he? That's all you know about it.

Patrick (*sitting and laughing*). Well, you have a cheek! O Fogarty! (*He is convulsed with laughter.*)

(CURTAIN.)

ACT II

A YEAR ELAPSES.

SCENE.—*A large, bare office. The entrance door is the centre. On the right of the door is a high desk partly railed in. To the left of the door is a window, through which some unfinished works can be seen. Forward on the left stands a table on which geological specimens are piled. Pieces of machinery lie about the floor. A door near the front on the left leads to an inner office. A horse shoe is nailed over the entrance door. There are a couple of chairs and a high stool near the desk.*

A workmen's bell rings. A few figures pass outside.

Patrick is discovered looking out the door. He is smartly dressed, and brightened up in manner.

Patrick (*counting*). Sixty-five, sixty-six, sixty-seven—(*Uncle Bartle comes in, followed by Ned, dressed in his Sunday clothes*)—sixty-seven—I like to count them, Uncle Bartle, as they turn in to work. It's pleasant, though it's not my duty.

Bartle. I counted better men one bitter night, it's forty years ago.

Patrick. This is more hopeful—isn't it?

Bartle. There were high hopes that night, too, and nothing came of it.

Patrick (*pointing out*). Ours are the fighting sons of industry. Men brought from far and near to dig out wealth for Ireland. And they're doing it, doing it, Bartle, in spite of all the croakers.

Bartle. They've dug a lot out in twelve months, to be sure.

Ned. And the wealth's as far away as ever from us.

Patrick. We won't have long to wait now, father. Can't you show some patience?

Ned (*dolefully*). The way the land's cut up! The way it's hoked and rooted! Not a grain of corn growing from Pool-beg to Lough Ree! And the good grass trampled, trampled like the side of a new grave.

[*Bartle examines the geological specimens.*

Patrick (*cheerfully*). That's all right. Everything is going on just as we expected. What are grass and corn in the eyes of science?

Ned. Bartle, I don't think I'd feel it half so bad if I saw anything coming out of the ground but them big heaps of redness.

Bartle. Ned, you're as thick against it as Dan Fogarty. Where is Stephen?

Patrick. Over in the smelting-house. The last test is going on.

Ned. We hear that story again and again and again.

Patrick. Don't be so impatient, father. A new invention can't be expected to go right the first time.

Ned (*sits*). I don't know! If a crop of oats failed, I'd try the land with barley.

Patrick. Not if you wanted oats, and nothing else but oats. We want iron, and nothing but iron, and it's something different we're getting.

Bartle. What is it you are getting, Patrick?

Patrick. Oh, I can't exactly tell. The expert from Belgium says it will all come right. The iron seams are there, but they're mixed up with something else.

Ned. Everything's mixed up with something else—Lord help us!

Patrick. He thinks it may be copper.

Ned. I wonder it's not silver, or even gold itself, you're making out it is.

Patrick. It's gold and silver we'll transmute it into, father.

Ned (*to Bartle*). That's the sort of talk he learned out in Belgium at the school where Stephen sent him. I wish he never went there.

Patrick. Not a bit, father. It's Uncle Bartle's rann that's running in my head. "When the Glinn and Awn Bwee run into Lough Ree, it's a river of gold will run out of it." That's the gold we're all working for. And it'll flow from us all over Ireland before we've finished.

Bartle. You must give the young men time, Ned. They've done a great deal in the while they're at it.

Ned. Ay; dug up half the country and filled the place with miners.

Bartle. You're as bad, Ned, as Miss Stubbs, who says the smoke has spoilt her lilacs.

Ned. Father Murphy declares the parish swims in liquor.

Patrick. Liquor goes with wages. Father Murphy wants a new church now to hold his congregation.

Ned. Yes; the natives are crushed into the chapel yard, as well as squeezed out of the public-houses.

Bartle. The strike has given them a rise. When they're used to the increase they'll settle down again.

Patrick. Ah, that strike delayed us greatly. (*Cheerfully*). But we make the money move around us, don't we? Even Fogarty, himself, admits that, now.

Ned. Dan Fogarty was wise. He stuck to his land and set a lot of potatoes which he sold out to your workmen at a price was never heard of. Fogarty is coining. I wish I had taken his advice.

Patrick (*contemptuously*). What's he doing but huckstering? He'll need it all to pay his mortgage to the bank. Wait a little, father, wait till our furnaces are going and the new line working for us. Then you'll see who is coining.

Ned. I'm waiting, Patrick, tired waiting, in troth.

Bartle. Fogarty's not satisfied. He's going about now trying to get up a public meeting to denounce this business just because he's out of it.

Patrick. Nobody will mind him. Let him go about till he's tired.

Bartle. Larry Casey, the Poor Law Guardian's with him.

Patrick. What about the pair of them! They can do no harm.

Bartle. Not if things go right with Stephen from this time out. But if the country thinks he's going to fail, the country will denounce him as a swindler and a humbug.

Ned. I wish that it was all over—one way or the other. Is Sir Thomas here to-day?

Patrick. Yes, and his sister, Mrs. Walton, too.

Ned. Augh! (*tosses his head*). I don't believe it's lucky to have her coming here. She's red-haired—very nearly!

Bartle. She likes to be into everything that's on—small blame to her! She's lonely.

Ned. She'd fitter keep among her own sort, Bartle.

Bartle. These high-up ones like novelties. She has her eye on Stephen, maybe.

Ned. The Lord in heaven forgive her.

Bartle. Wouldn't it be a grand connection for Stephen J. O'Reilly?

Ned. I wouldn't envy such a thing to him at all.

[*A whistle sounds without.*

Patrick. That's himself! He wants me. (*Goes out.*)

Bartle. Patrick's full of courage. He's a great boy. God preserve him!

Ned. He was always wild about machines and science, but his head's clean turned lately.

Bartle. Turned in the right direction, Ned. You ought to be proud of him, and have more faith in both himself and Stephen.

Ned. My faith is over the ground, not under it.

Bartle. Faith should be over us and under us, and all about us, Ned. If we lose faith it will be a black day for us. Young people must be venturesome.

Ned. You oughn't to be venturesome with land at all.

Bartle. The man who put the first plough into it was venturesome, the man who dug the first well was venturesome; while the Fogartys who went on rooting in the old way and drinking from a ditch foretold his ruination. (*A cheer is heard without.*) Listen, Ned, to that. The diggers are succeeding.

[*O'Reilly comes in in his shirt sleeves, carrying a piece of pig iron. Mrs. Walton, a fresh woman of forty, follows, carrying a similar piece. Both put their pieces on the table and laugh. Patrick follows, carrying O'Reilly's coat.*

O'Reilly (*exultingly*). Success, Uncle Bartle. Cousin Ned, we've struck it.

Mrs. Walton. Mr. Mulroy, I echo Stephen J.! . . . We've struck it in the eye and floored it roundly.

Ned. The Lord in heaven be praised. I didn't once expect it.

[*O'Reilly puts on his coat, which Patrick holds.*

Mrs. Walton. Uncle Bartle, go and tell them—tell everyone you meet—we've struck the iron hot. Shout it on every hill-top. To-day we've freed imprisoned millions and founded a new Ireland.

Bartle (*dryly*). To be sure I will, ma'am. Is that all I've to shout?

Mrs. Walton. Uncle Bartle, you're a humourist. Do you want more than that?

Bartle. No, ma'am; this will do for a beginning. (*Going.*)

O'Reilly. Bartle, don't tell everybody—only Kitty and her mother. (*To Mrs. Walton.*) Pressmen are around. Our friends should have the first chance to subscribe the capital.

Mrs. Walton. Stephen J. is slim as well as plucky. Bartle, never mind the shouting. We'll keep the liberated millions to ourselves at present.

Bartle. Very good, ma'am. (*Bartle goes.*)

O'Reilly (*moving and admiring the metal.*) I'll not fling away my fortune in a hurry. I've paid for my experience, Mrs. Walton. That's why it's precious to me.

Mrs. Walton. Oh, I got mine for nothing. I suppose that's why it's useless.

O'Reilly. Some things got for nothing are beyond all price.

Mrs. Walton. For instance, Stephen J.?

O'Reilly. Your assistance and encouragement.

Mrs. Walton. Stephen J., when you grow complimentary I know you want to shunt me. As long as I remain unnoticed, I feel I'm not in the way.

O'Reilly. As if you, Mrs. Walton, could remain unnoticed anywhere.

Mrs. Walton. Oh, I'm horribly in your way, I see, at present.

O'Reilly (*to Patrick*). Take this metal into my room, Patrick, and get my bench in order. (*To*

Mrs. Walton.) There's still a test I'd like to make for quality.

[*Patrick goes out L. Ned goes out C.*

Mrs. Walton. More tests! I knew you didn't want me. (*Comes a step nearer.*) And yet, if I could only stay and hold a file or something, it would make me so happy to be in it at the finish.

O'Reilly. Ladies, Mrs. Walton, don't exactly harmonise with iron filings.

Mrs. Walton. Then I may not stop and watch you?

O'Reilly. It'll be pleasanter to tell you the result in words.

Mrs. Walton (*abruptly.*) Good morning! (*Goes out suddenly. O'Reilly examines the samples of metal, whistling softly. Mrs. Walton comes back again.*)

Mrs. Walton. I left my glove behind me. (*Stands putting them on. O'Reilly watches her in an absent-minded way. After a time*). Do you know, Stephen J., I have come to the conclusion that you're made out of metal filings. . . . Have you ever tested yourself in scientific fashion?

O'Reilly (*looks at her a few seconds*). Mrs. Walton, that will be my last experiment.

Mrs. Walton. Why defer it to the last?

O'Reilly. Because the other ones are more important. [*Patrick comes in from L.*

Mrs. Walton. Well—success to the experiment. (*Going.*)

O'Reilly. Which one, Mrs. Walton?

Mrs. Walton. Oh, of course, the great one. I'll come back presently to hear about it. (*Smiles,*

nods, and goes. O'Reilly gazes after her abstractedly.)

O'Reilly (*starting*). Everything ready, Patrick.

Patrick. Yes. Do you want my help inside?

O'Reilly. No. Stay and shoot at sight anyone who attempts to interrupt me.

Patrick. All right. I'll get my gun. There's someone coming.

[*Knock at outer door. O'Reilly takes up the remaining piece of metal and runs off L. Patrick opens the door. Fogarty and Casey come in.*

Fogarty (*looks about him*). Good morning one and all. You didn't expect me and Mr. Casey quite so early, Patrick.

Patrick. I didn't expect you early or late.

Fogarty. Oh no! Where's O'Reilly?

Patrick. He's engaged at present. Can you call again, gentlemen?

Fogarty. O Lord, no! This won't do for us at all. Tell him Mr. Fogarty and Mr. Casey, Poor Law Guardian, are here and want to speak to him immediately—immediately!

Patrick. He instructed me to shoot you.

Fogarty. Shoot me. Shoot me!

Patrick. To shoot anyone attempting to disturb him.

Fogarty. This is nothing short of rank intimidation.

Casey. It's not the tune for us—a pair of gentlemen calling in a representative capacity—on urgent public business. We aren't going to be frightened quite so easily.

Fogarty. By no means, certainly not, on the contrary.

Patrick. Have you any objection to tell me what your business is?

Fogarty. You? Tell you? . . . Well, say about the supply of water. (*To Casey.*) That will do, eh? (*Patrick knocks at door L.*)

O'Reilly (*within*). What now?

Patrick. Mr. Fogarty and Mr. Casey, Poor Law Guardian, want to see you about the supply of water.

Fogarty (*loudly*). And other public business. (*Sits.*) O Lord, ay!

O'Reilly (*comes out*). Public business must have preference even to experimental science, gentlemen.

[*Patrick goes behind the desk.*

Fogarty. Certainly it must. Public interests before private, we say, always. Isn't that so, Mr. Casey? (*Blows his nose.*)

O'Reilly. Then, if you please, gentlemen, we'll proceed to it at once.

Casey. We are here, Mr. O'Reilly, in a representative capacity.

Fogarty. Two representative capacities.

Casey. Regarding your encroachments on the rights of running water.

O'Reilly. And what may that be, gentlemen? As an American citizen, I am not acquainted with them.

Casey. It's the question of the hour. The pressing, urgent question.

O'Reilly. You are the same gentleman, I think,

who was here some time ago with a petition asking that your niece be appointed sub-postmistress for the district

Casey. I am, and I'm proud to say, sir, that my efforts were successful. I wrung the office from the grasp of an unwilling Government.

O'Reilly. And I think you called a month later to collect my small subscription towards the building of a monument?

Casey. A monument to a long-neglected local poet.

O'Reilly. You claimed those objects as the question of the hour, if I remember rightly.

Casey. At the time, sir. And the great heart of the public nobly answered to my claim.

O'Reilly. I'm glad to know it. You appear as a supporter of the law, at present, Mr. Casey.

Casey. No, sir, I abhor the law, but I'm the true and tried upholder of the commonwealth, which you are violating night and day in using public water privately.

O'Reilly. You disapprove the use of water publicly or privately?

Casey. No, sir. We disapprove of introducing foreign methods to our people. Methods to enrich unworthy capitalists at the cost of the community.

O'Reilly. This is interesting. Pray sit down. (*All three sit.*) Does anybody else propose to use this water?

Casey. No; and if they did, itself, they wouldn't be allowed. The water of this land was meant for nobler purposes.

Fogarty. O Lord, ay! It belongs to no one, and it must remain the same as it was always.

O'Reilly. Then, you contend that what has been lying idle since Creation should remain so still.

Casey. Yes, if it's to be worked by foreign capital for the benefit of foreigners.

O'Reilly. My good man, capital and science own no nationality. Besides, its use by us will enrich the country.

Casey. We don't know that at all. A private company is not the country, nor half of it.

O'Reilly. But when the private company provides employment for the people.

Fogarty. Oh, ho, ho! It puts the wages up on farmers.

O'Reilly. I thought you said you represent the public.

Casey. Yes, the public who are the backbone of the country—the sturdy farming class—not the foreign workmen you bring here to swamp us. O Lord, ay!

O'Reilly. We've seventy men at present—only three of these were born out of Ireland.

Casey. And they have the best paid jobs you offer.

O'Reilly. If they have the best paid jobs they do the work most needed. They're experts. We couldn't start at all without them.

Casey. The independent heart of Ireland won't stand it.

O'Reilly. Do you expect to be independent without industries? Do you expect industries can

spring up of themselves—without some practical knowledge? Are you grown-up men or babies?

Fogarty. This lingo about public industries is not the thing at all. Our private industries are what we're after.

O'Reilly. Ah! now you touch bed-rock. How are your private interests interfered with?

Casey. I'm the owner of a corn-mill at Ballyboy.

O'Reilly. What! The cracked old wheel that hasn't moved these thirty years?

Casey. I'm thinking of a new one. If I built it, I might want more water.

O'Reilly. If you can show you suffer loss from us, we're willing, sir, to meet you; but not one cent will you get out of me until you prove your title. We're business men, not pigeons, Mr. Casey.

Fogarty. Oh, ho! You'll find no pigeon in a hawk like me. You needn't think it, Stephen.

O'Reilly. What are your special losses, Mr. Fogarty?

Fogarty. I'll tell you that. I'll tell you in a minute.

O'Reilly. Well—proceed. My time is limited.

Fogarty. Your workmen are trespassing on my land, tearing down my fences, and taking water from my well without permission. My meadow's beaten like a duck-house door.

O'Reilly. Have you explained this to them?

Fogarty. I put up notices, but they won't mind them. I closed the stile, and they broke through again. If you don't put an end to it I'll go to the police.

O'Reilly. You went to the police before you thought of coming here, and they can't help you. It's an old path. The well is public property.

Casey. We're the guardians of the public rights, not you.

Fogarty. Ho, ho! The well's on my ground. If trespassers won't keep off, I'll fill it up. Let them drink Lough water. There's plenty of it.

O'Reilly. You'll not be so un-neighbourly, when you are losing nothing.

Fogarty. Won't I, indeed? Oh, ho, ho! (*Ned comes in.*) Ned Mulroy, *you're* not like your upstart Yankee cousin. What do you say to a farmer's fences torn down and his best land paddled over by a pack of rascals?

Casey. And three of them admitted to be foreigners!

Ned. My own land's torn up and trampled down, and I can't help it.

Fogarty. If it is, you brought it on yourself. O dear, ay! You brought it on yourself, and on us, too. If you took my advice——

Casey (*rising*). There's no use talking to them. We'll convene a public meeting and create opinion on it.

Ned. Mr. Fogarty, you're the only one makes money out of this attempt at mining. You have no right to grumble. You're growing rich upon it, while some of us——no matter!

Fogarty (*flattered—blows his nose*). Aw, Ned, I'm the boy knows how to make the most of everything. Did you see that rood of cabbage I put in? Did you see my early turnips?

Casey. As Poor Law Guardian, I'm entrusted with this matter, and I warn you, O'Reilly, I will exercise my power.

O'Reilly (*rising*). Very well, and I will use the water till I'm stopped. Good morning to you, gentlemen. (*Going in L.*)

Casey. The public, sir, will hear of this, believe me. They'll hear the way their representative is treated. (*O'Reilly disappears into his room, L.*)

Ned. Mr. Casey, that old mill of your's is good for nothing. You know it's good for nothing.

Casey. It's good enough for me to build a claim on. He said he'd give me nothing without forcing him.

Patrick. I'm sure, gentlemen, if you allow a little time——

Casey. Fogarty, come on! The public rights are trampled in the dust. The public water's wasting while we're talking here. I'll go and call a meeting to denounce him. And you, too, Fogarty, if you're hunckersliding, I'll denounce you also. (*Goes.*)

Fogarty (*to Ned*). I've the finest crop of cabbage in the county.

Patrick (*to Fogarty*). If we give up mining you'll have nobody to buy it.

Fogarty (*aside to Patrick*). Tell Stephen I'll be back again, when I get rid of Casey. The fellow thinks of no one but himself. Ned, you and me's old friends. You'll come and see my turnips. I've something else to say to you.

Ned. Anything to take my eyes off heaps of rubbish.

[*Fogarty and Ned go. Dick, an engine driver, comes to the door.*

Dick. How long is this shift to last? The engine's working four-and-twenty hours.

Patrick. Mr. O'Reilly wishes it kept going till six o'clock—to test the water power.

Dick. Then you may tell him it won't work. The pressure's failing—every minute failing. Go and tell him.

[*Kitty comes in. She is neatly dressed.*

Patrick. I daren't interrupt him. He's engaged in an experiment.

Dick. Very good, sir. You'll all be interrupted when the engine stops. (*Goes.*)

Kitty. Is my father here?

Patrick. He's just gone out with Fogarty. Didn't you meet them?

Kitty. Maybe I did, and maybe I didn't. (*Sits.*)

Patrick. Now what business have you here? If I had my way, I wouldn't let a woman through the gate.

Kitty. It's a good job you haven't got your own way, Patrick. Where is Stephen?

Patrick. In his room, busy—very busy—with important work.

Kitty (*rising*). I want to see him. (*Goes to door and knocks.*)

O'Reilly (*within*). Hello! Who's there?

Kitty. Me!—Kitty. (*A pause.*)

Patrick. He'll be mad with you for troubling him. (*Goes on writing.*)

Kitty. No, he won't. And if he was, itself——

Patrick. Now you'll catch it. (*O'Reilly opens his door.*)

O'Reilly (*in the door*). I'm very busy, Kitty.

Kitty. Yes, Stephen, I brought you down a little mat I made for you. (*She produces a small round piece of embroidery.*)

[*O'Reilly comes out, closing the door carefully behind him, and walking on tip-toe.*

O'Reilly (*speaks softly*). What on earth is that for?

Kitty. You said you'd put the first piece of iron you made in a glass case. This is to go under it.

O'Reilly (*looking*). But it is far too pretty to be stained by iron. Where did you learn to make it?

Kitty. I learnt at the convent. I thought you might like it. (*Folds it with an air of disappointment.*)

O'Reilly (*advancing and taking the embroidery*). So I do, Kitty, and it shall go in the glass-case with the iron. I admire it tremendous. But I admire more the faith you showed in working it—faith in my efforts, Kitty.

Kitty. I knew, Stephen, that you'd make the iron.

O'Reilly (*sits*). Tell me how you know?

Kitty. I knew it by a dream I had one night about it.

O'Reilly. Come now, tell me what you dreamt. Sit down and tell me.

Kitty (*sits*). I dreamt Lough Ree was all dried up and empty, and a heap of gold was lying at the bottom of it.

O'Reilly. A heap of gold—that's elegant! And so you dreamt that, Kitty?

Patrick. Dick was in to say the water power's failing.

O'Reilly (*startled*). Failing? Hell! Destruction! No, it can't be! A spring boils up continually in the centre.

Patrick. Dick seemed sure of it.

O'Reilly. Dick is an alarmist. He's always finding something wrong with something.

Patrick. There must be a reduction after four-and-twenty hours. (*Goes on writing at the desk.*)

O'Reilly. Of course there must. The spring will grow when there's a regular drain upon it. We'll not have such a draught again before the Fall.

Kitty. There's not going to be any failure, Stephen. I saw the gold in plenty in my dream.

O'Reilly (*turning again to Kitty and speaking jocularly*). But you saw the Lough run dry, Kitty, and the Lough's our main dependence. Water, dream of water. That's our capital.

Kitty. Water in a dream is bad. It tells us trouble's coming.

O'Reilly. You like the dry lake best? (*Admires the embroidery, and puts a fossil on it.*)

Kitty. Yes, Stephen. You and Patrick were up to your waists in it.

O'Reilly. In the water?

Kitty. In the gold, Stephen. It was round and round you both, till you were nearly buried in it.

O'Reilly. I hope we'll not be that, whatever happens.

Kitty. And then, Stephen, I dreamt that you were going away.

O'Reilly. Were you sorry, Kitty?

Kitty. I was very sorry—very, very sorry in the dream.

O'Reilly. Was I going away alone?

Kitty (*shyly*). No, Stephen, there was someone with you.

O'Reilly. Then I wasn't quite forsaken. Who was with me?

Kitty (*more shyly*). I wouldn't like to tell you.

O'Reilly. You must, Kitty, now you've gone so far.

Kitty. It was a high-up lady; one that you know well.

O'Reilly (*laughing*). It wasn't Mrs. Walton?

Kitty (*sighing*). Yes.

O'Reilly. And you were sorry for me, Kitty? That's unkind.

Kitty (*brightly*). But, Stephen, I was only sorry in the dream.

O'Reilly (*rising*). Ah, I see you don't believe in dreams as much as I do. (*He holds the embroidery in his hands.*)

Kitty (*shyly*). They say that you don't believe —as much as people ought—in dreams or anything.

O'Reilly. I reckon I believe a great deal more than those who say so.

Patrick (*looking up*). Kitty, Stephen's making

game of you. He believes no more in dreams than you or I.

Kitty. Stephen won't make fun of me if I *am* only dreaming.

Patrick. He has no time for nonsense like your dreams.

O'Reilly. All I've ever done or may do was a dream at first.

Patrick. Oh, that's another sort of dreaming altogether.

O'Reilly (*looking at his watch*). I guess it's time I woke up. My crucible is waiting! (*Runs into his room, taking the embroidery.*)

Patrick. He's a queer mixture, Kitty.

Kitty. God help him, he's the mixture that we all are, with the great big heart within him none of *us* have, Patrick.

Patrick (*coming from the desk*). Kitty, don't you be so foolish as to set your mind on Stephen. (*Points to door.*) Your betters are before you.

Kitty (*indignantly*). You think you're very wise. I know him just as well as you do, Patrick—maybe better. Yes, I know my cousin better than the whole of you put together.

[*Mrs. Walton and Sir Thomas come in.*

Mrs. Walton (*looks smilingly at Kitty*). Know Stephen J., do you? You're smarter, then, than most of us.

Kitty. I brought him down a message, ma'am.

[*Sir Thomas examines the ore.*

Mrs. Walton. Ah, yes; to be sure! (*To Patrick.*) Has he finished his experiment?

Patrick. He's trying his last test.

Sir Thomas. Another last?

Patrick. This is positively so, Sir Thomas.

[*Cries of exultation from O'Reilly's room. O'Reilly comes bounding in. Kitty, going, pauses at the door.*

O'Reilly. It's done! It's done! It's done! It stands the final test. The quality is excellent.

Sir Thomas. Congratulations, O'Reilly.

Mrs. Walton. I wish your honour joy!

O'Reilly. The honour must be shared by all who helped—the honour and the profit—yourself, Sir Thomas, Patrick, Ned, and Kitty; you all must share the honour.

Kitty (at door). And Uncle Bartle, Stephen.

O'Reilly. Yes, Uncle Bartle, certainly. We'll not leave him out of the vote of thanks, nor your embroidery. (*Kitty goes out smiling.*)

Mrs. Walton. You think of other people's share before your own.

O'Reilly. I think of THE work, Mrs. Walton, before anyone.

Sir Thomas. There shouldn't be much trouble now to raise the capital. The County Bank will help you.

O'Reilly. The bank will help us—will it! Are you certain?

Sir Thomas. As one of the directors, I can promise this. It will be to our advantage.

O'Reilly. Then we've nothing more to fear. Nothing, nothing, nothing! (*Listens.*) What's that, Patrick? The turbine seemed to stop. (*A pause.*) No, it's going again. (*A whistle blows. Dick comes to the door.*)

Dick. The engines can't be worked. The water power's gone.

O'Reilly. Gone!

Dick. I told you it was going an hour ago. A wheel can't live on air. (*Goes.*)

Sir Thomas. What does this portend?

O'Reilly (*despairingly*). A bust-up. We are ruined. Swamped in sight of land.

Mrs. Walton. Surely, surely, not so bad as that?

O'Reilly (*hurriedly*). Without water we can't work at all. Without water our enterprise is stranded high and dry upon the rocks. Without water we're magnificently damned!

Mrs. Walton. And half my money in it. (*Sits despondingly.*)

O'Reilly. That riles me, Mrs. Walton, beyond everything.

Sir Thomas. You should have tested this before you went so far.

O'Reilly. Sir Thomas, I tested all I could. I found a spring of water boiling up enough to work a factory. I enquired 'most of everybody, and no one ever knew the Lough to shrink below a foot in summer.

Patrick. The spring was there, Sir Thomas. All our lives we've seen it.

Sir Thomas. I know. But what's become of it?

O'Reilly. The borings must have tapped it!

Sir Thomas. An engineer might be expected to remember that.

O'Reilly. When you play a game of cards with nature she's pretty sure to have one up her sleeve.

Yes, Sir Thomas, you are right. I ought to have remembered. But when a man has got to fight his claim with brother man at every peg he drives, he must work overtime to keep his eye on nature.

Mrs. Walton (*comes and puts her hand on O'Reilly's shoulder*). Stephen J., we'll not vex you with complaints. Set your wits to work again. You're not going to give in?

[*Ned, Fogarty, and Uncle Bartle come in.*

O'Reilly. I see no way to mend it.

Fogarty. Ho, ho! You're in a fix now. Didn't I tell you that it wouldn't work, Sir Thomas?

Ned. And the way the land was butchered to be brought to this!

Fogarty. You may say that, Ned. And now my crop of cabbage will be thrown on my hands with nobody to eat it.

Bartle. Stephen, never fear. While there's water in the world the saint's words can't be broken.

Fogarty (*quoting*). "When the Glinn and Awn Bwee run to Lough Ree," Oho! "it's a river of gold will flow out of it." O Lord, ay! Out of your pockets, Sir Thomas, and your's, ma'am, and everyone's that's had a hand in this.

O'Reilly (*starting*). Uncle Bartle, there lies the one solution! Daniel Fogarty, you're wiser than you reckon. To follow out the rhyme we must divert the river! We'll cut a channel from both rivers slick down into Lough Ree. Then we'll have three lakes besides the mountain rainfall at our

backs—as good as half Niagara! Mrs. Walton, these old saints knew meal of wheat from sawdust. The prophecy has saved us.

Mrs. Walton. Scientifically rendered.

O'Reilly. That's all we need—the old ideas brought down to our time practically—practically.

Bartle. And honestly relied on.

Sir Thomas. Then we must persuade Mr. Fogarty to come in and help us. The land between these points is his, in title.

O'Reilly. Yes, yes; you'll help us some. We'll buy your rights out if you doubt our solvency.

Fogarty. Buy my rights out? Oh, ho, ho! you will. (*Blows his nose.*) Buy out the Bank of England!

Sir Thomas. You wouldn't see the whole thing come to ruin, Fogarty?

Fogarty. Oh! Where's the law to hinder me?

O'Reilly. Sir Thomas, it's now my turn to complain. You said you'd no existing laws to hamper enterprise. It figures up you have, when one old man, protected by the law, can stop the country's progress.

Sir Thomas. Mr. Fogarty's not one of that sort, surely? He wouldn't shelter himself under ancient privilege.

Mrs. Walton (*wheedling Fogarty*). Mr. Fogarty's a cautious, prudent man. I don't think any of you exactly understand him. He's quite right to be careful. (*To Fogarty.*) Just come with me. We'll take a walk and see what they are doing.

Fogarty (*puzzled*). Upon my conscience, ma'am —— !

Mrs. Walton. You'll not refuse a lady—will you? Ah, these people think that they can bully us who don't believe in crazes. When I want advice in my affairs again, Thomas, I know where I'm going to come for it.

Fogarty. I'm thinking, ma'am, you take me for a fool.

Mrs. Walton (*laughs*). I'd make a grave mistake if I did that.

Fogarty. On my soul, you would, ma'am! As big a mistake as when you let this Yankee fellow pick your pockets. Oh, ho, ho! It's me that knows! It's me that took his measure. Buy me out, indeed! I'd see you all in jail first.

Mrs. Walton (*indignantly*). That's your final answer?

Fogarty. Ay, it is. (*Going.*) My last and final answer.

Sir Thomas. You refuse to treat with us at any price?

Fogarty. At any price. My land's not in the market.

Ned (*to Fogarty*). They'll not tear it up like mine. They only want to cut a narrow channel.

Fogarty. They'll not get the breadth of one potato furrow.

O'Reilly. You've no thought of the people waiting for employment?

Fogarty. The rascals? What do I care? They'll not work for me at reasonable wages.

Bartle. You're standing out against the ancient

prophecy. It's not a lucky thing for anyone to do that.

Fogarty. O Lord, ay! All old women's stories! And what's more, I'll stop the well, and get the County Council to step in before you bring a water famine on us.

O'Reilly. Go with Mr. Fogarty, and see what damage our men have done him. We don't wish a neighbour to lose anything by us.

[*Fogarty goes.*

Bartle. We'll go with them, Ned, to valuate the trespass.

O'Reilly (*to Bartle*). Try and keep the men outside in humour. And Patrick, speak to Duncan, our foreman. We must work overtime to hide our failure. Tell the men the water doesn't matter a cent—tell them anything to quiet them.

[*Patrick, Bartle, and Ned go out.*

Sir Thomas. Fogarty's a hopeless case, I fear.

O'Reilly. No, I think I see a way to make him yield.

Mrs. Walton. Stephen J.'s fountain won't dry up like the Lough.

O'Reilly. I think that I heard, Sir Thomas, your bank has got a mortgage on old Fogarty's estate.

Sir Thomas. The matter's not a secret. Everybody knows it.

O'Reilly. Then the water will be our's.

Sir Thomas. I don't quite see your reasoning.

O'Reilly. No? . . . You must foreclose and sell him out at once.

Sir Thomas. We can't do that, O'Reilly. Our loan's quite safe. He pays his interest regularly.

O'Reilly. You hold his papers. No one can prevent you.

Sir Thomas. It would be too high-handed—not to say dishonourable.

O'Reilly. Sir Thomas Musgrove, baronet, do you think that I came from the States, with blast of trumpets, making all this fuss, to have your antiquated honour stop me? Do you think I wheedled you and this accomplished lady, and my own poor relatives to put your trust in me for nothing? Do you think the industrial future of this country's to be hampered because a few old bank directors think themselves the guardians of our honour? No, sir. Not by a long shot. No. Not this side of Kingdom-Come or Bedlam.

Sir Thomas. But you don't understand, my friend. If we did this, the entire trading public would be on our backs.

O'Reilly. If you expect to do big things in this world, sir, without incurring censure, you're greener than I fancied.

Sir Thomas. We haven't yet advanced to your American ideas. We respect men's civil rights.

O'Reilly. This is war, Sir Thomas—war in which Fogarty or I must fall. In the interests of progress, I have sentenced Fogarty.

Mrs. Walton. Bravo, Stephen J. That's the way to look at it.

O'Reilly. Sir Thomas, with the suffrage of the ladies on my side, I feel the case decided.

Sir Thomas. Neither gentleman or lady will make me a party to such over-bearing conduct.

O'Reilly. You were in the army for a while, Sir Thomas. Did you ever read up tactics?

Sir Thomas. This isn't war in my eyes. It's business—simple business.

O'Reilly. I'm afraid you don't quite score by the distinction.

Sir Thomas. We'd be pure aggressors.

O'Reilly. The primal creed of business is aggression. But look at it from the point of public duty, sir. Suppose there was a famine, and a man locked up his corn—not for a rise, which would be right and proper, but from downright cussedness, till his corn rotted and the people starved. Wouldn't it be right to force that man to sell?

Sir Thomas. Famine's quite another thing, O'Reilly.

O'Reilly. No, sir; famine of your industries is just the state of this land-shackled country. You landlords were got rid of for no other cause, and if we're to have a lot of fresh ones just as bad—and forty times as plentiful——

Sir Thomas. We still, thank God, have law.

O'Reilly. And that's against Dan Fogarty, as it happens. Justice, progress, law, your interests, every virtue that gentlemen would care to sit beside on Sundays, form a combine to crush this land shark—Fogarty.

Sir Thomas. I didn't see it in that light, I own.

O'Reilly. Everything is seen in sidelights in this country.

Mrs. Walton. You're quite right, Stephen J. Nobody considers anything but with reference to something else.

O'Reilly. And then your duty to the bank, Sir Thomas! That should be your chief concern, as a man of business.

Sir Thomas. What of that?

O'Reilly (*banteringly*). You're a bright director, you are. In the interests of your shareholders, don't you see that the future of your bank is all bound up with us—with making this scheme successful?

Sir Thomas. That's, certainly, what we considered when we took you up.

O'Reilly. And you call this sticking to your clients? To have old man Fogarty's papers in your safe and let him block the way. What right have you, as guardians to the bank, to help keep back those millions from your counter? Is that how you safeguard the interests of your shareholders?

Sir Thomas. There's something in that way of looking at it, certainly.

O'Reilly. Well, it's up against you, sir. You see your dooty to your station in the country. Here he comes! Peel off your coat and slap straight into him, if you're a man of principle.

[*Fogarty, Ned and Patrick come in.*

Fogarty (*as he comes through the door*). It's a folly to talk. You've no one but yourself to blame, Mulroy. You wouldn't take advice from me. Oh, no! You gave me the cold shoulder when you fell in with the gentry. (*To O'Reilly.*) You talked of catching eels on Preshogue Farm. If you go outside you can spear them at your own front door in dozens. Oh, ay! They're wriggling

in the mud like all the rest of ye, wriggling for water—Ho! ho! ho!

Patrick. The spring that used to rise up in the middle's gone.

O'Reilly. You didn't travel as far as Fogarty's trespass.

Patrick. No; he wouldn't let us.

Mrs. Walton. I'm sure, Mr. Fogarty's only waiting to be made an offer, a reasonable, business offer, by the company.

Sir Thomas (*to Fogarty*). Yes; you'll turn over in your mind what you can fairly take to let us have the water.

Fogarty. Ho, ho! It's buying in, not selling out, I'll be, Sir Thomas. I suppose you'll have an auction of the plant and fittings? I want a wheel-barrow badly. Them iron one's me darlin's.

Sir Thomas. Just step here a moment, Mr. Fogarty. I have a word to say to you will make you think another way, perhaps. (*Draws Fogarty aside. They enter into conversation.*)

O'Reilly (*to Mrs. Walton*). Your brother's on our side?

Mrs. Walton. Of course, he is. He knows who's going to win. (*She goes to Ned, who sits near the door.*) Mr. Mulroy, your faith in Stephen J.'s not shaken by this accident?

Ned. If you saw my bit of land, you'd lose your faith in heaven.

Mrs. Walton. I'm ashamed to hear an Irishman say that.

Ned (*rising and lifting his hat*). I ask God's pardon, ma'am, and yours! I don't know rightly

what I'm talking of to-day. (*Moves about disturbed and helpless in his mind.*)

Mrs. Walton. It looks like that, indeed.

Ned. I'm an old man, brought up on the land—it's like a mother's face to me. I never cared for anything but land, and when I thought it was my own, I kissed it with the two lips of my heart. (*Wildly.*) Oh, God in Heaven! more than life, I worshipped it.

Patrick (*feelingly*). Father, don't take the loss of it so much to heart.

O'Reilly (*coming to Ned*). Cousin Ned, you find me guilty. Well, I'll not deny the verdict. I only ask you to delay my sentence.

Ned. I blame no one but myself. I'm the oldest here but Bartle, and I ought to be the wisest. I blame no one but myself.

O'Reilly. Where is Bartle now?

Patrick. He stayed to tell the men about the prophecy.

O'Reilly. To keep down the insurrection! He's a born statesman.

Fogarty (*aside to Sir Thomas*). Hut, tut! You wouldn't do it on me!

O'Reilly. If Uncle Bartle holds fast, we'll be saved by prophecy.

Fogarty (*breaking out loudly*). O Lord, no! Never! I can raise the money elsewhere. Ho, ho, ho! You'll see, you'll see, Sir Thomas, it's no use to bully me. I'm not like Ned Mulroy. I'm a man respected far and near by everybody. (*Blows his nose.*)

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Sir Thomas (*to O'Reilly*). There's sense in what he says.

Fogarty. So, I see it's all a plot, a Yankee plot and swindle. But I'm too wide awake for all of you. And I've backers in the parish priest and all the well-off people. O dear, ay! I could raise a thousand pound to-morrow if I wanted it.

O'Reilly. You'll want it, Mr. Fogarty.

Fogarty. Oh, yes! So will you to take you out of this. I'm off to rouse the country, me and Mr. Casey. O Lord, ay! You'll smoke me out. You'll cut off sun and wind from me. Ho, ho! It's me will smoke you out and cut off water from you. Wait a bit, my boy! Good day to you, Sir Thomas. Poor old Ned Mulroy! (*Goes out.*)

Sir Thomas. We daren't move an inch if he can raise the money.

O'Reilly. You keep your word, Sir Thomas. Press the bank claim on him. Leave the rest to me. Do you think a skunk like that is going to stop my progress?

Mrs. Walton. There's fight still left in Stephen J., believe me.

O'Reilly. If you stand by me, Mrs. Walton, I defy creation.

Mrs. Walton. Oh, I'll stand by you, never fear, my friend.

Sir Thomas. But really, Mr. O'Reilly, I don't see my way.

Patrick. The country will be on us if we treat him harshly.

Ned. In Ireland a man's land is as sacred as his

wife. I wonder if I offered Kitty to him now! Kitty and two hundred of a fortune——?

Mrs. Walton. The very thing. A suitable match for both of them. (*Pulls Ned aside.*)

O'Reilly. My friends, I'm into this. My automobile is starting for a run. If a child or lady (*bows to Mrs. Walton*) wanders in my way, I'll stop and move them gently. But if a grown-up man plumps down on my track deliberately and plugs his ears, I'll just advance the speed a twist, and rip!! The car may jolt. I'm staring, staring straight ahead. I've got no time to look around for accidents.

Mrs. Walton. Stephen J., I hope I'll be allowed a seat in that same car.

O'Reilly. The engineer is honoured. (*Bows.*)

Ned. The Lord in heaven save us. This man wouldn't stop at anything.

O'Reilly. Not if stopping meant destruction to my passengers. (*Takes Sir Thomas aside.*)

Mrs. Walton (aside to Ned). You and I, Mulroy, will see about this. You think your daughter is willing?

Ned. She'll do it to save her family.

(CURTAIN.)

ACT III

AFTERNOON OF SAME DAY

SCENE.—*Mulroy's garden. On the left is door into cottage. On right a small wooden gate and paling. Along the back runs a low hedge, beyond which is the road. A few old-fashioned flowers grow about the door and along the path leading from gate. In the centre against the hedge is a rough seat or bench.*

[*Enter Mrs. Walton and Fogarty beyond the hedge in the roadway. They are in earnest conversation.*

Mrs. Walton. That's all very well, Mr. Fogarty, but modesty may be pushed too far; and, if a man in your position makes up his mind to marry——

Fogarty. I didn't say I had made up my mind.

Mrs. Walton. Well, you've thought about it. You'll own that—now and then—a whiff of thought about some pretty girl—when you hear the song birds singing. Come now! don't you think of us a little?

Fogarty. Lord, no! It never troubles me.

Mrs. Walton. I'm disappointed—sadly! A fresh, hale, handsome man of six or seven-and-thirty.

Fogarty. Ho! ho! ho!

Mrs. Walton. You can't be much beyond it. When a man in the prime of life admits that we poor women—poor, downcast, humble women—rouse no manly sentiment in his breast——

Fogarty. H-h-hum! hum! hum!

Mrs. Walton. What can we expect from common sort of people?

Fogarty. Upon my word and conscience, ma'am ——!

Mrs. Walton. I see I have gone too far.

Fogarty. No, not at all—you haven't.

Mrs. Walton. Presumed too far on our acquaintance, Mr. Fogarty.

Fogarty. O dear, no!

Mrs. Walton. Or, shall I say, ventured beyond my depth, induced by a similarity in our age and character!

Fogarty. Mrs. Walton, by the holy coat!——

Mrs. Walton. Let it rest here, Mr. Fogarty. If little Kitty's silent admiration hasn't touched you—what's the use of all my talking?

Fogarty. Kitty Mulroy's ——; what is it you call it?

Mrs. Walton. Silent admiration for you—for you, Dan Fogarty.

Fogarty. I never noticed any admiration, good, bad or indifferent.

Mrs. Walton. Precisely what I'm telling you. I can see the girl worships the ground under your feet.

Fogarty (looking at his feet). O ay! the six-and-sixty acres that's an-under me. Sure that's what they're all after.

Mrs. Walton. Well, my friend, in this working world, we must all look to the main thing. You wouldn't think too highly of a girl who didn't look an inch beyond your face and figure. Now would you, Mr. Fogarty?

Fogarty. By gob, ma'am, there you have me. The face doesn't count a thraneen, and the figure! The figures that I fancy has the letter L in front of them. Them's the figures! Them's the figures.

Mrs. Walton. From all I understand—though I've no right to talk of it—Kitty Mulroy will have a tidy figure at her back for the lucky boy that gets her.

Fogarty. Five hundred pounds, or six? or maybe over.

Mrs. Walton. Really, Mr. Fogarty, that's more than I can answer. But her father's well off—and, look here!—her cousin, Stephen, will stand by her if she gets a man that pleases him.

Fogarty. He doesn't like a bone in my body.

Mrs. Walton. He fancies you're a bit too clever for him.

Fogarty. I wonder would they offer seven hundred with her?

Mrs. Walton. Don't you think the business way's to ask the girl's father—if you mean to pop the question?

Fogarty. Me pop the question! No, ma'am. You won't catch me a-popping questions—unless I knew the girl's figure to a shilling.

Mrs. Walton. Then why not try your luck, man? Not that there can be any doubt about it.

Fogarty. I should think not! I should think not!

Mrs. Walton. Still, you know, we women have a notion. We like being coaxed a little.

Fogarty. Ho-ho! ho.

Mrs. Walton. Some of us like being asked the question two or three times.

Fogarty. O Lord, ay! I know that!

Mrs. Walton. Say, Mr. Fogarty, that unless she marries you, you can't allow her cousin, Stephen, to take the water.

Fogarty (alarmed). Eh! What? What's that?—the water!

Mrs. Walton. Make it a portion of the contract. So much down, or else—no water.

Fogarty. I wouldn't let them cut my land up for a fortune.

Mrs. Walton. Then the whole thing will be ruined.

Fogarty. What do I care? It'll be ruined, anyway.

Mrs. Walton. But while the money's among them, why not have your share of it? Remember this. If Ned Mulroy's sold out—who's going to buy his farm?

Fogarty. I'm the next-door neighbour to it. But people make such fuss when one man gets another's little holding.

Mrs. Walton. If you were in the family—if Kitty was your wife—who'd say a word against you?

Fogarty. Oh, ma'am, but you're the cute one!

Divil receive the cuter! You'll excuse me, ma'am, for saying it?

Mrs. Walton. I'm not the only cute one here this evening. You see this yourself, quite clearly —clearer than I can tell you.

Fogarty. Ho, ho! It's me that sees it! Why, Casey, himself, couldn't say a word against the daughter's husband having it.

Mrs. Walton. Of course not. Go in and make the match up with the parents. You can court Kitty after.

[*They come through the gate.*

Fogarty. Oh, I can court her easy. And, look here! (*Points to flowers.*) I'll tache her to have something better round her door than rosy-poseys. (*Mrs. Walton holds up her finger chidingly.*) Ducks and chickens, Mrs. Walton. Lord ay! Ducks and pigs and chickens.

Mrs. Walton. Her cousin Stephen's coming.

Fogarty. Why, he'll be in on top of us!

Mrs. Walton. Never fear. I'll keep him talking. In you go.

Fogarty. You don't think that he had any notion of her?

Mrs. Walton. What chance can he have with a man like you before him? In with you quick, and finish it!

Fogarty. Oh, it's you that has your head screwed on the right way.

Mrs. Walton. I always back the winner.

Fogarty. Ho, ho! You do that, certainly.

[*He goes into the house. O'Reilly appears outside the hedge.*

O'Reilly. You here, Mrs. Walton?

Mrs. Walton. I'm admiring Kitty's flowers.

O'Reilly (comes through gate). It was a dirty yard. I got them to plant something. Kitty took to it wonderfully.

Mrs. Walton. You are planting beauty round you every step you turn.

O'Reilly. Old Miss Stubbs says that our smoke has spoiled her lilacs.

Mrs. Walton. Never mind, Miss Stubbs. I'll square her. Listen, I've been working wonders since I saw you.

O'Reilly. You are always working wonders.

Mrs. Walton. But this is real work. I'm marrying our friend Fogarty. There never was such sport since the days of badger-baiting. Stephen J., congratulate me.

O'Reilly. On the conquest of old Fogarty?

Mrs. Walton. The water, friend!—the water!

O'Reilly. The water, Mrs. Walton?

Mrs. Walton. The whole Atlantic Ocean if we want it.

O'Reilly. I reckon you have earned the Pacific on top of the Atlantic if you're going to marry Fogarty.

Mrs. Walton. Stephen J.—can't you be serious?

O'Reilly. Impossible! when you talk of marrying Fogarty.

Mrs. Walton. I? (*Laughing.*) Dear no! Your pretty cousin, Kitty. He didn't make me an offer. Though, I own, he paid me compliments. Very earnest compliments.

O'Reilly. It's up against you to be serious now.

Mrs. Walton. As you seem to have forgotten half our ancient customs, I'll explain. Fogarty has just gone into the old folk to make up his match with Kitty. He didn't say exactly, but I fancy that he'll have her if he gets seven hundred pounds, and we shall have the water.

O'Reilly. Hell!

Mrs. Walton. No! Cupid's bow—and water.

O'Reilly. I call this simply damnable.

Mrs. Walton. Stephen J., don't talk such nonsense. These marriages are excellent. I've seen lots of them and know that they turn out the happiest.

O'Reilly. A barbarous old custom!

Mrs. Walton. You are here to dig up iron—not to re-mould our customs. Kitty's a good girl. She'll do her parents' bidding and be very happy doing it.

O'Reilly (sitting, with a sigh). I guess it's their own business.

Mrs. Walton. It's our business, also—your business, in particular.

O'Reilly (rising). Yes, rather!—Mrs. Walton, I suppose it's all your doing.

Mrs. Walton. There was talk of it a year ago or more—before you came among us. At least, my maid told me so.

O'Reilly. I'm a bit surprised at Kitty.

Mrs. Walton. Tell me frankly. Do you want to marry her yourself?

O'Reilly. I? Not if I know my business!—that is——! Not at all.

Mrs. Walton. Then don't you spoil her chances.

You men that gad about—I know you thoroughly —you like to have a girl to make faces at. Of course, you mean no harm, but you fill her head with fancies. No one but a woman knows how these gossamer webs of fancies can enmesh a simple girl. You go and you forget, but she doesn't forget. I don't want to preach sermons. Only this. Men never know how hard it hits a woman to be left. After all, what's wrong with Fogarty? Something of a fool. But fools make first-rate husbands I can tell you, from experience. She'll be very glad to catch him if nobody upsets her.

O'Reilly. Rather a low-down grade of working—ain't it?

Mrs. Walton. Not to people who don't see it. The results are satisfactory at any rate, which is more than can be always said of other methods.

O'Reilly (changing manner). Mrs. Walton, you're a philosopher.

Mrs. Walton. So Mr. Fogarty assures me.

O'Reilly. Then he's not a fool entirely.

Mrs. Walton. By no means. And if I were in your place, I'd humour him—not squash him—even if the humouring took the shape of half this fortune he is after.

O'Reilly. Call that business, Mrs. Walton?

Mrs. Walton. Admirable business. Go help to make the match up. They'll not think it interference. It's quite the rule to call a friend in—just to split the difference between them.

O'Reilly. I've known that done at fairs about a bullock.

Mrs. Walton. Well, if money enters into mar-

riage-making—and you know it does so everywhere—isn't it pure humbug—pure, undiluted humbug—to go on pretending otherwise?

O'Reilly. I reckon you're right. If you'll allow me—I'll step in and prospect.

Mrs. Walton. And I'll step down the road and talk to poor Miss Stubbs about her lilacs. I'll call back when you've finished.

[*She goes out through gate. As O'Reilly goes to door Fogarty excitedly comes out, followed by Ned and Mrs. Mulroy.*

Fogarty. No, no! Not a shilling, not a penny under seven hundred. Don't you think that I'm well worth it?

Ned. You may and you may not, Dan. It's a power—a power of money for a poor man that doesn't know what's before him in the world. (*Sees O'Reilly.*) Stephen, dear, I'm all in swithers. I don't know where I'm standing.

Fogarty. Until you make an offer, Ned, I can't deal with you.

Mrs. Mulroy. Tell Stephen how much divides ye. He'll maybe be able to do something—towards bringing ye together.

Fogarty. Doesn't the whole lump divide us? He hasn't made an offer.

O'Reilly. I expect you're on match-making?

Fogarty. No—not a bit!—We're off it. Off it, Ned Mulroy. Do you hear me?—Off it—off it.

Mrs. Mulroy. Don't be so hasty, Dan. Sure we did'nt say we wouldn't make an offer. Ned, why but you name some figure?

Fogarty. Seven hundred is my figure. Take

me or lave me. I'm not the man to huckster for a wife wid anyone.

Mrs. Mulroy. Indeed, you're not that same. The dacent man you are. And ever was and will be! God reward you!

Ned. Won't you take five hundred? Put your hand there. (*Holds out his hand.*) Put it there, Dan dear, and clinch it.

Fogarty. Seven hundred pounds or nothing.

Ned. Five hundred—and a hundred more the day the first child's christened.

Mrs. Mulroy. Now, there's a gallant offer.

Fogarty. You bate me down a hundred. I'll not budge another copper.

Mrs. Mulroy. Stephen dear, can't you divide it? Split the difference.

Fogarty. Why, the water's worth the money—not to name that rood of cabbage. Sich tindther-hearted cabbage! No, ma'am, it's seven hundred pound or nothing. I say, am I not worth it? Ho, ho! I'm worth a thousand.

O'Reilly. In my figuring, Mr. Fogarty's dirt cheap at the price.

Fogarty. You hear that, Ned Mulroy! I say, you hear that?

Ned (sitting). I hear it, Dan—God help me!

Mrs. Mulroy. Stephen, gra-machree, you'll settle it between them.

O'Reilly. I will. If Mr. Fogarty agrees to stand the water, I'll stand half the money, cousin. Come. (*Takes Ned's hand and holds it out to Fogarty.*) Let it be a bargain.

Fogarty (striking Ned's hand vigorously). A

bargain, Ned, a bargain. Done, at seven hundred.

Ned. It's a woeful dale o' money. But there! I'm glad it's settled.

Mrs. Mulroy. The Lord be praised! It's lucky we have friends, Ned.

Fogarty. No credit, mind! Cash payment—on delivery.

O'Reilly. You shall have a cheque to-morrow.

Fogarty. No cheques—I don't like paper.

O'Reilly. You'll have gold if you prefer it.

Ned. Not till the wedding morning, Stephen. That's the custom.

Fogarty. Oh, I don't want your money till I earn it. Here am I and there's the girl——

O'Reilly. Now, where is Kitty anyway?

Mrs. Mulroy. I don't just rightly know—I clean forgot her.

O'Reilly. Perhaps, as she has a hand in this deal——

Mrs. Mulroy. The not a hand or hand in it she has—the creature!

O'Reilly. Doesn't she know about the bargain?

Ned. How could she know before the thing was settled?

Fogarty. She'll know it soon enough.

Mrs. Mulroy. It'll be a piece of news. I may as well be telling her.

Fogarty. Ay, to be sure you may. No harm's done in telling her.

[*Mrs. Mulroy goes into house.*

O'Reilly. It doesn't seem to strike you that she may have an objection

Ned. Kitty an objection?

Fogarty. An objection to be married! Ho, ho! That's a good one!

O'Reilly. Not so much an objection to be married as to be given away without her knowledge.

Fogarty. Not at all. She'll be delighted—O Lord, ay!

O'Reilly. I suppose you ought to know.

Ned. She always admired Dan's fine breed of cattle. And here she comes—the jewel!

[*Enter Mrs. Mulroy and Kitty.*

Mrs. Mulroy. I was telling her. She's flustered. There now, honey!

Ned. No wonder, with what's done for her. Daughter, thank these gentlemen. (*Kitty hangs her head.*) Don't you hear me? Thank these gentlemen for the way they've made you happy. Your cousin in particular.

Mrs. Mulroy. It's strange she is—poor girleen! It's her first experience.

Ned. That'll soon wear off. Dan, God bless you—take her hand. Hould out your fist here, girl. Your sowl, Dan, come here closer.

Fogarty. Hum! Hum! Ho! ha! (*He makes awkward attempts to take Kitty's hand.*) I'm shy before the colleens.

Ned. Arrah! Put your arms round her and kiss her.

[*Fogarty spreads his arms expecting Kitty to run to him. She does not move.*

Ned. Glory be! What ails you, man? Give

her a squeeze—ye divil! A shlusther and be done with it. Can't ye do something comical?

Fogarty (*making awkward movements*). O Lord, ay—I can rollic. (*He makes a drive at Kitty who evades him.*)

Mrs. Mulroy. The match is made up, honey, and it's you that should be proud of it. Don't be strange before your cousin. Sure it's him that settled everything.

Kitty. My cousin settled—this—for me?

Mrs. Mulroy. He did that same—God spare him! We were on the point of parting when he stepped in and closed the bargain—gallous—like a gentleman.

Fogarty. Snapped me up at my own asking, Lord, ay, certainly.

Kitty. I'm beholden to you, Stephen.

Fogarty. I never seen a man so ready since I sold that bald-faced filly to the Englishman. You mind her, Ned Mulroy—the filly out of that old mare I bought from Casey?

Kitty (*to O'Reilly*). So it's you I have to thank for it?

Mrs. Mulroy. You couldn't repay him back if you lived to be a hundred.

Kitty. I'll not live to be a hundred, mother, but I'll pay him back for all that. (*To O'Reilly.*) How much am I indue to you?

O'Reilly. Don't talk about it, Kitty. I'm—I'm getting paid in water.

Kitty. You've sold me for the water?

Mrs. Mulroy. That's quare talk. He's paying

half your fortune, and the poor boy must get something.

Ned. Now the lake's run dry—he'll get whips of water elsewhere.

Kitty. Ah! My dream has all come true. I saw the lake run dry and my brother and my cousin in the bed of it, and gold was all about them. Ah! they'd dig the groves of Paradise to bring that gold about them!

Ned. The digging won't be much. Dan's farm won't be hurted.

Kitty. I'm not thinking of the farm.

Mrs. Mulroy. It's afraid she is they'll make it be a long way round for milking.

Fogarty. I'll make them put a bridge up. Don't let that distress you, Kitty.

Kitty. Milking your cows won't distress me, Mr. Fogarty. It never will distress me. Do you understand?

Fogarty. Eh! What! Upon my conscience ——!

Mrs. Mulroy. She means it will be a pleasure to her to sit under your cows.

Fogarty. I see! I see! That's elegant.

O'Reilly. Kitty, if I thought that you objected ——

Kitty (*changing her manner*). Did I say that I objected?

O'Reilly. Judging by your manner——

Kitty (*briskly*). Well, now, judge by my manner. (*To Fogarty.*) Dan, darling, I'm obliged to you. Come over here and sit with me. (*Goes to seat.*) Come and court me like a bachelor—just to

show my simple cousin how we do things in Ireland.

Fogarty (*awkwardly effusive*). Humph! humph! O Lord, ay—certainly. (*He sits beside her.*)

Kitty. He knows a lob about us. Thinks because we make hard bargains. (*Fogarty puts his arms round her neck. Her hair tumbles down.*) Thinks—Oh, Dan, you're choking me. (*She pushes him away.*) We'll have to put it off till you've learnt better manners. (*Rises.*)

Fogarty. Lord! It's girls are the quare things!

O'Reilly. I guess, friend, you speak gospel.

Mrs. Mulroy. They have lots of time to learn. (*Uncle Bartle comes in through the gate.*) Uncle Bartle, it's all settled, glory be to heaven! Kitty and Dan. It's Stephen settled it.

Kitty (*going to Bartle in suppressed emotion*). You see how they've disposed of me.

Bartle. I see your hair is towsled. Stephen, here's a letter. (*Hands letter.*) Well, Kitty, what's this business?

Kitty. Only I'm to be married.

Bartle (*looking from one to another*). Marriage is a good, old, ancient custom. I've known many seemed to like it.

Mrs. Mulroy. Come in and wet the bargain, Dan. A glass or two won't hurt you. Stephen, too, and Bartle.

O'Reilly. I want to read this letter.

Mrs. Mulroy. When you've finished it you'll join us; and Kitty, you bring Bartle. Praises be

to heaven. It's the joyful day of glory. (*She goes into the house with Ned and Fogarty.*)

[*O'Reilly reads his letter.*

Bartle. So, Kitty, that's the way with you?

Kitty. That's the way with me, Uncle Bartle. (*They stare at each other.*)

Bartle. It's a quare world—God keep us! A quare, quare world, Kitty.

Kitty. Isn't it?

Bartle (*after another stare*). It is.

Kitty. We've got to put up with it somehow. Dan and I will have gay times of it together.

Bartle. My girl, you're up to divilment.

Kitty. I'm doing as I am bid.

Bartle. You're not doing as you're bid. Down in your heart is rebellion. Black rebellion and disorder. Don't tell me!

Kitty. Would you like, Uncle Bartle, to be sold for profit?

Bartle. But who is it that's selling you?

Kitty. My cousin Stephen's selling me. Handing me over in part payment for a stream of muddy water. Selling me for iron.

O'Reilly. How about your parents?

Kitty. My parents know no better. It's the way themselves were married.

O'Reilly. They appear to be quite happy.

Kitty. Yes, they're very, very happy,

O'Reilly. The system don't work badly, then?

Kitty. But they wouldn't have been happy if they had the new ideas.

Bartle. You don't blame Stephen for the new ideas.

Kitty. I blame him for having the new ideas and acting on the old ones. I blame him for coming here and planting the new ideas round him, and, the moment that it suits his pocket, throwing up the new ideas.

Bartle. And helping you to Fogarty.

O'Reilly. I reckon she can throw up Fogarty if she wants to.

Bartle. There's the parents to be thought of, Stephen. It will hurt them.

O'Reilly. If Kitty's got the new ideas that won't trouble her.

Kitty (*slyly*). Or an old one that does better. I may grow to like Dan Fogarty.

O'Reilly. Environment works miracles. In ten or twenty years—or let us say, in thirty——

Kitty. Oh, it's begun already! When he's had a glass of whisky, to keep down his taste of onion, I dare say I can kiss him.

O'Reilly. But, really, now—that's awful! Don't you think so, Uncle Bartle?

Bartle. She's a match for him, I'm thinking.

O'Reilly. A sack of turf like Fogarty! It's sickening!

Kitty. His house is very nice, and his cows! His cows are beauties.

O'Reilly (*growing hot*). And he'll think as highly of you. He'll value you like one of them.

Kitty. If he values me as highly as his cows, I'll be more to him than water. Won't you come and see me coax him?

[*She goes into the house laughing.*

Bartle. That girl's going to sacrifice herself to help you.

O'Reilly. By God, I shan't allow it! She's a million times too good for him.

Bartle. You don't know Irish girls. She'll make a good wife to him and be happy doing her duty.

O'Reilly. Duty to hell! I say I shan't allow it. He's not going to have my money—not one blasted nickel! (*Goes to door.*) Come out here, Ned Mulroy and Mr. Cadger Fogarty. Come out here, you two ladies. I've changed about this business. Changed, changed. I'm not going to stand a dollar. (*Enter hastily Ned, Mrs. Mulroy, Fogarty and Kitty.*) The bargain's off, my friends. I'll have nothing to say to it.

Ned. But what about that water?

O'Reilly. Curse his rotten water! If I can't buy it honestly —— Look here, Ned, I shall take it. Take it, sir, in spite of him, if I have to go to Parliament.

Bartle. Parliament ineagh! What good can come from Parliament?

O'Reilly. More good, I reckon, than from selling white women into slavery.

Bartle. Parliament did that, too—in Cromwell's day.

O'Reilly. It's high time bury Cromwell and other old imposters. I'm out of this transaction. Mr. Fogarty, I withdraw. I'll not allow this marriage.

Fogarty. Ho, ho! You'll not allow it!

O'Reilly. I'll not pay you a dollar.

Fogarty. Then I'll do without your dollars. Kitty and me's made up to do without them. (*Puts his arms around her.*) Eh, haven't we? And he can fish for water somewhere else. Ho, ho! He'll stop our marriage—now we know what little Cupid means. (*Caresses her.*)

O'Reilly. Mulroy, are you prepared to sell your daughter?

Ned. Don't you see how she takes to him?

Fogarty. Uncle Bartle, where's your flute? Play us "Haste to the Weddin'." Your sowl, you —I can frolic. (*Prances about, turning Kitty round and round.*)

O'Reilly. A regular stage Irishman! They'd hoot him in the Bowery! How can you stand this, Kitty?

Kitty. I'm very well, I thank you. Go it, Dan.

[*Enter Mrs. Walton through gate.*

Mrs. Walton. Merry-making—all of you? Why don't you join them, Stephen J. O'Reilly?

Ned (*confidentially to Mrs. Walton*). He's met a disappointment about that stream of water. Dan refuses it entirely.

Mrs. Walton. But (*looks round at the others*) the scheme—the arrangement about Kitty?

Ned. Oh, that's all right—only Cousin Stephen's out of it.

Mrs. Walton (*taking O'Reilly's arm*). Come with me. We'll fix it. I've found a way to fix it. Mr. Fogarty, I congratulate you on your success. Miss Stubbs would like to see you. Stephen J., what you want is someone to look after you.

[*Mrs. Walton and O'Reilly go out by the gate arm in arm.*

Kitty (*looking after them with regret*). She has taken him away from us!

Bartle. Kitty, I'm afraid you've overdone it.

Kitty. You think so, Uncle Bartle? And she's forty if an hour!

Fogarty. Ho! forty's nothing—nothing. Look at me!

Kitty. You're a sight to look at! Go away. I hate you!

[*She sits and covers her face with her hands.*

(CURTAIN.)

ACT IV

SCENE.—Same as Act II

TIME.—Noon, next day.

[*Patrick comes from the inner room L., and opens the office door to Uncle Bartle, who comes in. He remains by the door. Patrick moves about arranging the office. They talk in a subdued tone.*

Bartle. Is himself here yet?

Patrick. Yes, here all night. Hasn't left the works since yesterday.

Bartle. This won't do, Patrick. It's his health will be failing next, and then what's to become of work and everything? Now, if he wasn't such a black teetotaller——

Patrick. He'd kill you if you mentioned drink at all to him.

Bartle. It's a pity. A drop would be the thing to pull the trouble out of him.

Patrick. Kitty brought down his breakfast, and though he used to talk to her when no one else dare go within a mile of him, he ate it like a dummy. I'm thinking, Bartle, it's a new invention he has in his head this morning.

Bartle. Something to keep the old invention

moving would be fitter. The men are uneasy, terribly uneasy. It takes me all my time to keep the fools in humour.

Patrick. What is it to them? Their wages will be paid in any case.

Bartle. Don't be foolish, Patrick. They know their wages won't be paid very long if there's no water to put round machinery. (*Looks out the door.*) Who's this coming? It's like Sir Thomas Musgrove's coachman.

Patrick (*also looks out*). It is. I'll see what he is wanting. (*Goes out. Bartle comes forward and is about to knock at the door of the inner room when Patrick returns with a letter.*)

Patrick (*speaking to someone without*). Yes, he'll get it at once. (*Comes forward.*) A letter from Sir Thomas. I wonder what about?

Bartle. They have their own affairs to write about, my boy.

Patrick. I'd rather see one from the Widow Walton. She's worth a shipload of her brother. I wonder will he marry her? (*Knocks at door of inner room.*)

Bartle. Lave him alone to marry who he likes—if he wants to marry anyone.

Patrick. A letter for you, Stephen

[*The door opens and O'Reilly, looking pale and anxious, comes from the room. He takes the letter, sits and looks over it. Bartle sits near the door.*

O'Reilly. Very good! Very good! (*Thinks, sees Uncle Bartle.*) Well, Uncle Bartle, how are things outside?

Bartle. Much the same way, Stephen. The men are going on bravely.

O'Reilly. No more water rising?

Bartle. A little in the morning. Not enough to make a start on. . . . You'll have to make a new move, Stephen, aroon. And you'll have to do it purty quick, I tell you.

O'Reilly. You think there's trouble brewing, Bartle?

Bartle. Isn't there always trouble brewing?—God preserve us!

O'Reilly. Yes. (*Thinks.*) Is Casey up to devilment?

Bartle. He's never up to good. He's one of them sort can't keep quiet. If he was in heaven he'd call a meeting to dismiss St. Patrick from the Patronship of Ireland.

O'Reilly. What's his last performance?

Bartle. He went round the country when he left you yesterday telling people you're an agent of the Government. They're going to have a meeting on the head of it after Mass next Sunday.

O'Reilly. I like that. . . . We must attend that meeting.

Patrick. You'll find it cheaper, Stephen, to buy Casey off.

O'Reilly. Has he anything to sell?

Patrick. I mean to buy off his ill-will.

O'Reilly. No, I haven't any use for it.

Patrick. I'm afraid you hardly know the harm he can do us.

O'Reilly. Before I speculate, I'll see what price ill-will runs in the market. What do you say, Uncle?

Bartle. You're a wise man, Stephen, not to give the like of him encouragement. His day is nearly over.

O'Reilly. That was in my mind. With Fogarty it's different. He has land which we must have. Casey's ill-will he can keep for those who want it.

Patrick. Bad luck to both of them!

O'Reilly. Amen to that sweet prayer! But how about next Sunday? Should we swarm to the meeting in a body and capsize it, Uncle Bartle?

Bartle. I think not, Stephen. I know some boys we can depend upon to make things lively without us.

O'Reilly (*rising*). Good! Set your boys to work. I'll strive to deal with Fogarty myself. (*Looks at the letter in his hand.*) Sir Thomas says his bank directors fear their hunting will be injured by the mines.

Patrick (*surprised*). Then they'll not press old Fogarty.

O'Reilly. It seems they'll not press anything that makes for much advancement.

Patrick. What in the name of goodness can we do?

O'Reilly. I reckon we must press the case ourselves. The truth is things are looking kind o' surly.

Bartle (*going to the door*). I'll take a stroll around and see the boys. (*Looks out.*) There's a gentleman on horseback riding down the road. My eyes—they're failing badly.

Patrick (*looks out*). It's Sir Thomas, Stephen.

O'Reilly. Sir Thomas is the man I want this moment.

Patrick. I'll run across and call him. (*Looks out the other side.*) Here's his sister, too.

O'Reilly. That's even better tidings. (*Goes towards door. Patrick and Bartle smile at each other and go out. Mrs. Walton comes in briskly, carrying a small basket.*)

O'Reilly. Good morning, Mrs. Walton. I'm sending out to intercept your brother. (*Shakes hands.*)

Mrs. Walton. Good morning, Stephen J. You're looking worried. I brought you down a bottle of old port. A bottle of sixty-seven.

O'Reilly. It's awfully good of you, but you see I never touch it.

Mrs. Walton. Sorry! Some fresh trouble brewing?

O'Reilly. Nothing very special; more old fogeyism. (*Hands her the letter.*)

Mrs. Walton (*looking at it*). Umph!—I guessed as much. I heard the growl last night about the foxes. Never mind. I've left off hunting, and I've news to cheer you! (*O'Reilly pushes forward a chair. She sits.*) It strikes me, Stephen J., that if you and I and these two (*pointing after Patrick and Bartle*) tumbled down your pitshaft, half the honest folk round here would perish.

O'Reilly (*sitting*). Four honest people in one place isn't a bad proportion.

Mrs. Walton (*smiling*). I wonder are we justified—you and I—in reckoning ourselves among them?

O'Reilly. In aim and object, surely?

Mrs. Walton. And our weapons, Stephen J.?—our weapons?

O'Reilly. Are the only ones available. Do you, too, begin to waver, though you've left off hunting?

Mrs. Walton. Oh, dear, no. I'm more confident than ever. My brother spoke to Fogarty last night before he wrote this rather shaky letter.

O'Reilly. He'll recall his pledge about the mortgage, now the fox-hunters have hold of him again.

Mrs. Walton. Oh, no. Thomas prides himself on sticking to his word. But it doesn't matter anyway. We can get on without him.

O'Reilly. Is Fogarty secure?

Mrs. Walton. As safe as bonds can bind him. I went down myself last night and settled everything. (*Smiles*).

O'Reilly. He must have felt quite honoured by your visit.

Mrs. Walton (*laughing*). O Stephen J., I wish you had been listening. You never saw a mortal man so puzzled over Kitty. (*In a changed voice.*) He had even doubts of me—of me. Just fancy that. (*Smiles.*)

O'Reilly. He must be quite a sceptic.

Mrs. Walton. I told him so, and hinted I was taken in in you.

O'Reilly. You're quite a slanderous person, Mrs. Walton.

Mrs. Walton. Mr. Fogarty doesn't think so. The fact is he hates the name of Stephen J. so

heartily that he fancies all the world shares his sentiments. That's how malice blinds you worldly men.

O'Reilly. Then he thinks that Sir Thomas helps me out of spite to him?

Mrs. Walton. Oh, he thinks you've got a hold on Thomas—found out something wrong about him. Something gives you a hold on him.

O'Reilly. I wish to heaven I had! But I forget the good I'm doing Fogarty—by stealth.

Mrs. Walton. And blushing lest you should'nt find it fame.

O'Reilly. You told him, Mrs. Walton, where he'd get the money?

Mrs. Walton. Of course, I told him—after tutoring Miss Stubbs, and calming her anxiety about her lilac bushes.

O'Reilly. She took your word for that?

Mrs. Walton. Yes. She fancies now the blossoms will be scarlet next time. Well, I left the money with her. Fogarty has got it. He paid the bank this morning.

O'Reilly (anxiously). But what about the securities?

Mrs. Walton. Here they are. (*Gives papers.*) He left them with her on his return from the bank. So I think we've got him tight.

O'Reilly. The Magna Charta of our independence. I'll lock it up inside.

[*Goes into the inner room with papers. Sir Thomas comes in. He carries a riding-crop in his hand and seems in a hurry.*

Sir Thomas. Oh, you are here?

Mrs. Walton. Yes; I come to see the works don't run off like the water.

[*O'Reilly returns.*

Sir Thomas. Well. O'Reilly, the water's still as shy as ever?

O'Reilly. Yes, Sir Thomas; shy and scarce at present.

Sir Thomas. You think it will return.

O'Reilly. It will return, but we've got to fetch it.

Sir Thomas. Ah! that's the trouble. If Fogarty can raise the money, all our squeezing's worthless.

O'Reilly. Oh, no. It's borne fruit already.

Sir Thomas. Borne fruit already? What does that mean?

O'Reilly. A friend came to his aid, I understand. He settled with the bank first thing this morning. You've lost your grip upon him.

Sir Thomas. You'll think it nasty of me, but, upon my word, I'm glad. It wouldn't do for us to press him harshly.

O'Reilly. Suppose the newer mortgagee does so?

Sir Thomas. That's another matter altogether. A private person isn't like a bank, which lives on public confidence. But, to tell you the plain truth, I think you're in a hole yourself, O'Reilly—a hole you'll not get out of, with everyone against you.

O'Reilly. You reckon this affair of mine is doomed?

Sir Thomas. I fear the thing's too big to carry out in Ireland.

O'Reilly. I guess, if I break down here, I'll not try it elsewhere.

Mrs. Walton. It vexes me to hear you talk like that.

O'Reilly. You see, it's forced upon me, Mrs. Walton.

Sir Thomas. After all, this is scarcely the place for such a big experiment.

Mrs. Walton. Why not?

Sir Thomas. We're all old-fashioned people, and we think old ways the best. We live upon the surface. We like it better than digging down as you're doing.

O'Reilly. Some are diggers; some are skimmers. For my part, I'm a digger and I'll dig as deep down as I can.

Sir Thomas. Why not go to England or America, and try your digging there?

O'Reilly. I had an offer to set up in Germany. As you know, I rejected it.

Sir Thomas. I'm aware the German scientist reported favourably on your plan. The Germans like new enterprises. If you take my advice you'll re-consider our position, like a man of sense, and try your hand among them.

O'Reilly. But how would that be carrying out our plan? It wouldn't benefit Ireland.

Sir Thomas. Well, if you must work here, make the people what they want—pots and ploughs and shovels.

O'Reilly. I made these things before I went away.

Sir Thomas. Then why not make them still? It would be much more popular than mining.

O'Reilly. I'll not retrace my steps. I'll bring the people forward with me. Forward ! Forward !

Sir Thomas. It's the biggest piece of folly in the world—forcing work the nation doesn't care for.

Mrs. Walton. So that's your latest notion, Thomas ?

Sir Thomas. It is, indeed. When I agreed to join O'Reilly, I thought success was easy. Now I see a number of objections which I didn't see at first—a mass of opposition and ill-will from various sorts of people.

O'Reilly. I don't think these have any solid footing.

Sir Thomas. I'm bound to say they have. Just look at what you've done. A peaceful valley turned to a pit-mouth, the labourers demoralised by too much wages, the farmers and the gentry interfered with in their business or their pleasure. In fact, the whole time-honoured custom of the country turned upside down, for the sake of making iron. Is it worth the price you ask for it ?

O'Reilly. I think it's worth the price, Sir Thomas Musgrove.

Sir Thomas. Of course, I don't impute your motives for a moment. You mean to do us good. But ask yourself this question—What will country life be like, if you make the place unfit for gentlemen to live in ? Besides, the people are not suited for this work, and don't care a rap about it. Mining is not their bent.

O'Reilly. You'd rather ship them off to do it elsewhere ?

Sir Thomas (*firmly*). No, sir. I'd rather root them in the soil at home to raise such crops as they can send to England.

O'Reilly. That's not my idea of industrial development.

Sir Thomas. I know it's not. But when you find insuperable difficulties——

O'Reilly. I haven't found them, by a long way, yet.

Sir Thomas (*going*). Oh, if that's your notion! I assure you they're before you. Difficulties you don't seem to see or reckon on, O'Reilly. You've been too long away to see it.

Mrs. Walton. I think there's very little before him he does not see, Thomas, if anybody can.

[*Fogarty comes in.*

Sir Thomas. I fancy he didn't quite foresee the opposition Mr. Fogarty would offer him, for one.

Fogarty. Oh, ho! No more did you, Sir Thomas; and that's what I came after you to tell you, when I saw your horse outside.

Sir Thomas. I assure you, Mr. Fogarty, it's not my fault if you've been inconvenienced by the bank's demand for payment.

Fogarty. O Lord, ay! I like your assurance, Sir Thomas, after how you handled me! But I don't care a rap for one of you, except this noble lady (*bows to Mrs. Walton*) and her still more noble friend—the other lady.

Mrs. Walton (*jocularly*). Mr. Fogarty, be careful not to compromise two women.

Fogarty. Oh, ho, ho! It's me that will be

careful, although I can't forget the manly words you said to me when nobody was listening.

Mrs. Walton. You'll not betray my confidence, I'm sure.

Fogarty. Indeed, I will not, ma'am, nor any other lady's, not for all the banks and bankrupt mines in Ireland. O Lord, ay! No!

Sir Thomas (*to Fogarty*). After all, I don't believe the bank would be so hard upon you as I hinted.

Fogarty. Oh, you're drawing in your horns—are you? Well, I may tell you, sir, I'm independent of your bank through the friendship of a lady I'm not going to mention. Oh, dear, no! Not for millions.

Sir Thomas. Mr. Fogarty, since you've met the bank, *I* have no more to say about the matter. (*Going.*)

Fogarty. I met the bank in full, sir, and withdrew my custom—at ten o'clock this morning.

Sir Thomas (*turning back*). I'm sorry if anything I said made you act so hastily.

Fogarty. Oh, ay! Cut my head and give me a plaster.

O'Reilly. Don't you think the best thing you can do, Fogarty, is sell that strip of land to us and pay off everyone?

Fogarty. Oh, no! When I want advice in my affairs I'll not come here to seek it. I'll not come to a man who can't manage business better for himself. O Lord, no! Not at all! Not even though I marry into his people—mind you.

O'Reilly. Never mind your marriage. You had to give security to those that lent the money?

Fogarty (*looking suspiciously at Mrs. Walton*). I'm all right—in the hands I'm in. Don't fret over me, O'Reilly.

Mrs. Walton. Mr. Fogarty has perfect trust in the lady who obliged him.

Fogarty (*uneasily*). To be sure I have. Implicit.

O'Reilly (*smiling*). Suppose she took it into her head to press you—press you harder than the bank did?

Fogarty. No fear of that! Not a fear! She hates your burrowings and your smoke too much to injure me.

O'Reilly. On the contrary. Now that we've satisfied her that her lilacs are quite safe, she's on our side entirely.

Fogarty. Oh, ho, ho! You know the lady. Well, as you do, let me tell you that Miss Stubbs thinks more of them old shrubs than of all the minerals you could lift in Ireland.

Mrs. Walton. I assure, you, Mr. Fogarty, she's changed her mind entirely.

Fogarty. Changed her mind since she lent me this money? Lord, no! Never!

Sir Thomas. Miss Stubbs lent you the money? Why, she hasn't got a penny.

Fogarty (*cunningly*). A friend might lend it to her to oblige another friend.

Mrs. Walton. I think you may tell them all about it, Mr. Fogarty, as things have gone so far.

Fogarty. No, not at all! I'll break no confidence, where ladies are concerned. No, not me! No, never.

O'Reilly. I think, Sir Thomas, I'll relieve his

scruples. In the slight embarrassment your bank's pressure caused him, Mr. Fogarty applied to old Miss Stubbs; and she, poor lady, being anxious to oblige a neighbour, fell back upon a friend. The friend was glad to help her on the usual security. Mr. Fogarty agreed, received the money, and in fulfilment of his promise honourably handed over all his title deeds as soon as he recovered them from the bank. As a man of business, I am willing to bear tribute to the promptness of his action; and, as a friend, assure him that his documents are at this moment safe in my possession.

[*Fogarty stares with open mouth.*

Sir Thomas. Then you're the friend yourself who lent the money?

O'Reilly. As Mr. Fogarty prefers to keep the matter private, I must respect his feelings. (*Significantly.*) He'll let us have the water.

Fogarty (*sits mopping his head with his handkerchief*). The deeds of Preshogue Farm in your hands!

O'Reilly (*blandly*). I suspected all along that he was on our side. I see by his expression he's convinced the time is come to join us openly. There was some sort of arrangement between us over another matter. That had fallen through. He objected, very properly, to mix up love and business——

Fogarty. Out-jockeyed by the Yankee! O Lord! Oh!

O'Reilly. You see, Sir Thomas, how a prudent man progresses. First, he had his doubts about our way of working, and lastly he had doubts

about the cheapest way to get into our company. A bumptious man would bounce us. But Mr. Fogarty decided on a waiting game. He knew, before the rest of us, that the water would run out, and reckoned rightly that we must come to him. As a prophet, sir, there hasn't been his equal since the days of Columbcille. He has us at his feet at last, and knows it.

Fogarty (*shakes himself from side to side, and groans*). O, dear; O, dear! You're fifty times a deeper man than I suspected.

O'Reilly. You see how he enjoys it! He knows we can't go on a day without him.

Mrs. Walton. He knows, like the rest of us, the mine is bound to pay.

Fogarty. Sir Thomas, you're a gentleman; you'll come to my assistance.

Sir Thomas. Really, Mr. Fogarty, I seem quite out of this.

Fogarty. You'll lend me so much money to pay off O'Reilly.

Sir Thomas. It's clear you're in his hands. The best thing you can do is to come to terms with him.

Fogarty. Mrs. Walton, ma'am! (*Looks appealingly at her.*)

Mrs. Walton. My money's in the iron business, every penny. I helped you all I could.

Fogarty (*rising*). It was you, ma'am, put me up to go to that old woman. There's the help your ladyship gave me.

Mrs. Walton. Don't forget your manners, Mr. Fogarty.

Fogarty. O dear, no! The yellow-skinned, old rattle-trap! The palsey, ugly, shrivelled bag of bones!

Mrs. Walton. For shame! For shame!

Fogarty. You made her play the catspaw to the Yankee.

Mrs. Walton. You asked me if I knew anyone who hated Mr. O'Reilly hot enough to lend you money. I suggested her—in sport.

Fogarty. You made sport of me and then came here and told him! The Mulroys—they all made sport of me. That girl the worst of any.

Mrs. Walton. But you're engaged to marry her?

Fogarty. She has turned quit agin me. I'm not so blind as not to see she's laughing at me.

O'Reilly. Blind, Mr. Fogarty? The one who says it, sir, insults intelligence. Blind, indeed! There's not an eye so skinned for business this side of Jerusalem. The way you snapped that claim from those slow bank officials is worthy of Chicago. Let us be friends. We want you. You cleared out those bank fellows who'd give their souls to have a lien upon our business.

Fogarty (cheerfully). Ha, ha! Sir Thomas, I begin to smell why you pulled in your horns. I cleared you out, O Lord, ay.

O'Reilly. And did the thing so neatly that I forgave your opposition and assisted you in ousting them.

Mrs. Walton. Yes; you helped him to make his fortune.

O'Reilly. No live man could help admiring the

artful way he nursed us—running down the mine to keep out other capitalists. But when he saw real snags ahead of us, he steps into the breach, shuts out the bank, and throws his pile of papers into the concern.

[*Fogarty stares at O'Reilly in a bewildered manner.*

Mrs. Walton. He quite deceived the whole of us.

O'Reilly. No, Mrs. Walton. You forget it was he reminded us, by that old rhyme, the way to win the water. That gave me a peep into his mind. I said without friend Fogarty this thing can never prosper.

Sir Thomas (*smiling*). This is quite a revelation.

O'Reilly (*mimicking Fogarty*). Ho, ho! Sir Thomas. You're not in it, nor you, Mrs. Walton, neither. Fogarty and I deceived the lot of you; and as for Ned Mulroy and folk like him! Pooh! They're simply nowhere—nowhere! O Lord, no!

Fogarty (*doubtfully*). Of course, I knew you couldn't do without me in the long run.

O'Reilly. I guess you did, my friend. (*Confidentially.*) Knew it before I did, and laid your plans accordingly. (*To Sir Thomas.*) And the artful way he passed along that mortgage, as if he couldn't help it! All the time you were pitying him he knew what he was after.

Fogarty (*flattered*). Lord, ay! I had my own ideas of Sir Thomas Musgrove's pity.

O'Reilly. Well, Mr. Fogarty, with all respect, you've done this thing enough. I'm tired of pre-

tences. You must join us openly, and when we cut the channel through your land——

Fogarty (*timidly*). You couldn't bring the water underground?

O'Reilly (*angrily*). My dear fellow, if we could, we wouldn't ask your leave. We'd simply take it while you waited round. Don't you try to twist on me again!

Fogarty. I only asked the question, Mr. O'Reilly.

O'Reilly (*blandly again*). You see his cleverness! Sir Thomas, I can do without you all with such a head as Fogarty's to help me.

Fogarty. Sir Thomas isn't going to leave the business, is he?

O'Reilly. With you coming in? I reckon not, if he knows chalk from cheese.

Sir Thomas. Really, I begin to think O'Reilly can do anything.

Fogarty (*with decision*). Upon my conscience, I begin to think the same!

O'Reilly. Oh, ho! You want to take a rise out of the Yankee. I do as I'm directed by the force of circumstances.

Mrs. Walton. Stephen J., you and Mr. Fogarty were made to run together—you're both so wide awake.

O'Reilly. You think we're quite a match for Mr. Casey?

Mrs. Walton (*smiling*). I almost think you are.

Fogarty. Oh, ho! Casey's nothing! We all know Casey's ramaish. Who cares a fig for Casey?

O'Reilly (*mimicking Fogarty*). A good-for-nothing fellow, O Lord, ay!

Mrs. Walton. He's puffed up with the notion Mr. Fogarty is backing him.

O'Reilly, We'll get the bulge of Casey when he hears that the land's assigned to me.

Fogarty (*alarmed*). Eh? Assigned? My land assigned?

O'Reilly. He needn't know I've claims upon the whole of it. (*Points to inner room.*) We'll keep that little business to ourselves. It's locked up safely there.

Fogarty (*relieved*). You'll just let on I sold that strip of land to you.

O'Reilly. Without the least compulsion. O Lord, ay!

Sir Thomas. Gentlemen, you're getting on so well in this combine, I'll not stand between your confidences. Good afternoon. (*Going.*)

O'Reilly. Good afternoon, Sir Thomas. Call another day and see us working.

Fogarty (*following*). But you can't be thinking of going out, Sir Thomas, because I'm coming in? We'll overlook the past. (*Sir Thomas goes out. Fogarty follows to the door and looks after him.*) Certainly, Sir Thomas! Let me hold your stirrup. (*Rushes after Sir Thomas.*)

Mrs. Walton. O, Stephen J., how can you drag that creature through the mud so cruelly—so cruelly?

O'Reilly. I let him off too cheaply. I must make that strip of land out double width to compensate myself. (*Kitty comes in. She carries a*

basket and draws back slightly on seeing Mrs. Walton.) Don't be afraid Kitty. We've quite finished business.

Kitty. I brought you down a drink of buttermilk. It's freshly churned. (*Takes a jug and glass from the basket.*)

Mrs. Walton (*smiling*). Stephen J., you're well looked after by your cousin.

[*O'Reilly takes the glass of milk Kitty pours him, stands between the two, looking from one to the other.*

Mrs. Walton. Are you very fond of buttermilk? (*Looks pointedly at Kitty.*)

O'Reilly. Yes; very fond of buttermilk.

Mrs. Walton. You prefer it to old wine?

O'Reilly. It suits me better. It's my native element. (*Drinks milk.*)

Mrs. Walton (*sighing*). I dare say you are right. I'll leave you to enjoy it. (*Going towards the door.*) But if you'd like some claret?——

O'Reilly. Above me—far above me!

Mrs. Walton. Very well.

O'Reilly. I'm afraid to mix my beverages.

Mrs. Walton (*turning to Kitty*). We've frightened your cousin, Kitty. You and I, between us.

Kitty. O, no, ma'am. It's the WINE he's afraid of.

Mrs. Walton. Well, maybe he is right. (*Shakes hands with O'Reilly.*) Good-bye. May you be happy! (*Goes.*)

[*O'Reilly and Kitty gaze at each other. He drinks more buttermilk.*

O'Reilly. This is lovely—perfectly lovely.

Kitty. It's myself that churned it.

O'Reilly. Are you glad I didn't drink the wine she offered me?

Kitty. Yes—in one way—I—was—glad.

O'Reilly. Tell me that one way, Kitty.

Kitty. If you don't know yourself I couldn't tell you.

O'Reilly. I think—perhaps—I know.

Kitty (taking up the jug). You couldn't have taken both.

O'Reilly. You know I couldn't, Kitty, knowing what they stood for.

Kitty. I must hurry home and help my mother to make the butter.

O'Reilly. Was it for sake of getting the water for us that you agreed to marry Fogarty?

Kitty. No! Others agreed for me.

O'Reilly. What others? Tell me, Kitty.

Kitty. You and the whole of them.

O'Reilly. I thought that you might like him.

Kitty. Did you?

O'Reilly. I own I was disgusted.

Kitty. You helped them—offering money.

O'Reilly. I withdrew the offer.

Kitty. Yes.

O'Reilly. If it wasn't to help the mining, why did you consent?

Kitty. That's my own affair.

O'Reilly. It was to help the mining. Didn't wish your folk to suffer?

Kitty. It was not to help the mining. Where would be the difference between marrying for iron and marrying for cows?

O'Reilly. Hadn't struck me in that light! I expect it's much the same thing in the sap. You're deeper than I bargained for.

Kitty. You're a good hand at bargaining.

O'Reilly. By gum! I'm getting welted. I thought you people greenhorns. I say, was it for me you agreed to marry Fogarty? To help me out of trouble?

Kitty. It was to help myself—to show you—Stephen——

O'Reilly. The sort of hound I was. You've succeeded pretty fairly. You're a girl worth the knowing. Hustled me this time, Kitty; so, if you've no objection. (*Puts his arms about her.*)

[*Fogarty rushes in.*

Fogarty. Here's a nice job—here's a nice job! Ho, ho! That's how the land lies? (*Stares.*)

O'Reilly. Somewhere about.

Fogarty. Well, that's not what annoys me. Lord no! I'll never marry. Haven't time to waste on women. It's a more important matter altogether. Casey's gone and billed me—to take the chair on Sunday.

[*Kitty shakes hands with O'Reilly and goes out smiling.*

O'Reilly. You promised Casey—didn't you?

Fogarty. But, Stephen, that was yesterday—before I joined the firm.

O'Reilly. That's the worst of being a leader. Your past stands up against you.

Fogarty. My past! What has a man's past got to do with him when he's got into power? (*Sits in Stephen's chair.*)

[*Patrick comes in.*

Patrick. Mr. Fogarty, Casey's there abroad and wants to see you.

Fogarty (*with assurance*). Tell him, if he wants me, I am in my office.

O'Reilly (*to Patrick*). Mr. Fogarty has joined us.

Fogarty. Of my own free will entirely. I couldn't see the industry in danger. Lord, no! I only humoured Casey to find out what strength he had.

Patrick. Well, he's outside talking to our surfacemen, and he sends for you to back up what he's telling them.

Fogarty. Oh, ho! I'll not back up the scoundrel. If he wants to talk to me, let him come here and do it during office hours.

Patrick. He says he'll not come in.

Fogarty. Tell him to clear off or I'll have him prosecuted. [*Casey appears at the door.*

O'Reilly (*to Casey*). Mr. Fogarty wishes to know, Casey, by what right you come here interfering with our workmen?

Fogarty. Yes, Casey. What do you mean by it? Don't you know I've joined the firm?

Casey. As a public representative, I claim my right to speak to anyone I choose.

Fogarty. You mustn't do it, Casey. It's against the law.

Casey (*coming forward*). I'm acting in the public interest, and I don't care tuppence for the law. Are you against the people?

Fogarty. O Lord, no! I'm the sworn champion of their regeneration.

Casey (*bewildered*). But I have billed you round

the place to take the chair at the Anti-Mining Demonstration.

Fogarty. Hut, tut! There's no such thing. It's nonsense.

Casey (unfolds a large printed bill containing the words "Anti-Mining Demonstration! Men of Ireland! Daniel Fogarty, Esq.") This is far from nonsense. It's the public opinion of the country.

O'Reilly. So that's public opinion, is it?

Casey. Most certainly! It's pasted up on every door and gate-post, and half your men are coming to support it.

O'Reilly. I'll take steps to bring the whole of them. Mr. Fogarty will preside, as you've arranged, and we'll thrash the matter out in public. Don't *you* think we'll shirk it.

Casey (regretfully). But Fogarty's on *your* side, now.

O'Reilly. I guess he is. He's not a fool. When the meeting's over everybody will be with us.

Casey. There's treachery in this. The country is betrayed. I'll have no more to do with it. *(Folds up the bill.)*

O'Reilly. As you please. We'll hold the meeting ourselves.

Casey. I'll have the thing proclaimed. I'll swear an information.

Fogarty. Oh, ho, ho! He'll call in the police to back him up with bludgeons. And the game will end with Casey's ducking in the lough.

Casey. I'll bring the matter up before the County Council. *(Goes.)*

O'Reilly. I reckon, we will manage to survive the ordeal.

[*Ned and Bartle come in.*

Ned. More trouble, Stephen! Oh, there's nothing but trouble since this work began. I wish you'd never started it.

Bartle. It's not worth talking of. A dozen men or so were listening to Casey, but they're laughing at him now his back is turned.

O'Reilly (*smiling*). It's all right. Mr. Fogarty is on our side. He's now our leading partner.

Ned. The Lord preserve my senses! It's a miracle.

Bartle. The Saint himself has done it.

O'Reilly. The saints are always on the side of earnest people.

Ned (*to Fogarty*). I never thought Dan, you would turn a mineral worker.

[*Bartle rushes out.*

Fogarty. Oh, ho, ho! They fancied they could do without me, but they couldn't, Ned. They couldn't. I'm giving them the water.

Ned. Glory be to God!

Fogarty. O Lord, ay! And what's better still, I'm giving them the benefit of my advice to guide them. Wait till Sunday comes. O! wait till Sunday comes, and I'll make a speech will rouse the nation to it's duty in regard to native industries. The future is before us, for the country's sick of Casey's. The time is come, and I'm the man to lead you. O Lord, ay.

[*They all look at one another and smile. Ned and O'Reilly have been whispering together.*

O'Reilly. One thing more. You'll be my best man at my wedding, Mr. Fogarty.

Fogarty. Best man? Oh, ho! I'm best man everywhere. Oh, certainly!

[*Horns and whistles blow outside. Bartle, accompanied by a number of men, come to the door and cheer.*

O'Reilly. Three cheers for Mr. Fogarty. He's saved the mineral workers.

[*All cheer.*

(CURTAIN.)

The End

"THE BUILDING FUND"

1/- *nett*

"Mr. Boyle displays in his comedy a close knowledge of the general features of peasant life in Ireland, while he portrays the central figures with a genius that entitles him to the warmest congratulations."—*Freeman's Journal.*

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"A most clever and amusing play, sure to succeed on any stage and provide entertainment for any audience."—*Dublin Evening Telegraph.*

"One of the best comedies which I have seen. It is well written and excellently constructed. A few more comedies like Mr. Boyle's should do much to attract audiences to the Abbey Theatre."—*Evening Mail.*

"A singularly interesting play."—Mr. Clement Shorter in *The Sphere.*

"Amused a good audience."—*The Referee.*

"Created a lasting impression."—*Catholic Herald.*

"Mr. Boyle's delightful comedy."—*The Speaker.*

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"'The Building Fund' roused the house. Gently and tenderly appreciative of Mr. Yeats' poetic essays, as the audience had been, Mr. Boyle's wonderful piece of workmanship woke it to enthusiasm. Here presented with a technique not inferior to that of Ibsen or Hauptmann was a little comedy of human frailty, human failing, human life, so carefully studied and so exquisitely written that even the carping critic could find nothing he wished bettered. . . . So marvellous is this new playwright's dramatic power that the slender theme held the tired London audience breathless from beginning to end. Wonderful sense of the stage, wonderful character-drawing, and curious, simple language of which every word told literally gripped the hearer."—*The Morning Post.*

"'The Building Fund' which seemed to entertain last night's audience still more continuously is a clever new excursion in an old dramatic kind—the comedy or farce of one quality. Mr. Boyle's misers are of pure Celtic design."—*Manchester Guardian.*

"The comedy was punctuated with peals of the heartiest laughter, and was, perhaps, the best received of the three pieces put on last night."—*Manchester Courier.*

"An exquisite piece of workmanship. The audience was never dull a moment while 'The Building Fund' was under discussion."—*Leeds Mercury.*

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" Mr. Boyle's comedy was amusing, and hit off many traits of Irish character in an extraordinary way. No more amusing incidents were ever written than 'The Building Fund.' "—*Hull Daily News.*

" A bright comedy . . . striking a truly humorous note."—*Newcastle Chronicle.*

" The chief pleasure of the evening was derived from 'The Building Fund.' Some of the things said in it have a rugged originality, and the play touches many chords of human nature."—*Yorkshire Post.*

" A very excellent piece of work full of unforced humour."—*Glasgow Evening Times.*

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" A play of extraordinary shrewdness and insight, and its humour is irresistible."—*Glasgow Evening News.*

[This is the only one of Mr. Boyle's plays which has been so far performed out of Ireland.]

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1/- *nett*

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